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Biography



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VOX HUMANA
A SELECTION OF POEMS WRITTEN BY
JOHN MILLS

Extracts from Reviews

"The sonnet 'Life in Death' might have been supposed to have been written as a pendant to Tennyson's 'Maud'; if it had not been printed during the Crimean War, before 'Maud' had seen the light. . . . It is pleasant to have the promise of some reminiscences of the writer."—*Leeds Mercury*.

"These exquisite verses should have many readers. The writer's mind was largely moulded by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Jean Paul, but in every poem the note of his genius is heard. . . . We hope the promised reminiscences will appear soon."—*British Weekly*.

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"Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye."

—*Literature*.

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"While all the contents of this little volume show a mind of refinement and genuine artistic sympathies—with great power of musical expression of pure and elevated thoughts—the Birthday Sonnets, which you have been brave enough to publish, will appeal especially to many, who will find in them the echoes of their deepest emotions. . . . —ALEX. McLAREN."

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"Some pieces are likely to command a large audience. The 'Loom' is one of these, 'The Law' another."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"This is a volume full of such excellent things as to entitle its author to the reverent regard of all who love good poetry. It is indeed a human voice charged with pathos and thought, modulated by a refined taste."—*Bradford Observer*.

Price 3s. 6d.

FROM TINDER-BOX TO THE "LARGER" LIGHT.

D.93

THREADS FROM THE ⚡ ⚡ ⚡
LIFE OF JOHN MILLS, BANKER
(AUTHOR OF "VOX HUMANA"):
INTERWOVEN WITH ⚡ ⚡ ⚡
SOME EARLY CENTURY RECOL-
LECTIONS BY HIS WIFE ⚡ ⚡

⚡ ⚡ "Stand, shuttle, stand, at the Master's command;
⚡ ⚡ The web is finished, and in His hand."

Manchester :
Sherratt & Hughes
1899

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*To our Children, and our Children's Children;
To the few Old Friends yet with us; and
In loving memory of the Many who have
“Crossed the Bar.”*





CONTENTS

PART I

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

	PAGES
1830—Coronation of William IV.—Tinder-box and Brimstone Match—Home and School Life—Margaret—John Bright and Temperance Meetings — The Shuttle at Home—Robin and Margit—At Home with the Shuttle—Plug Riots—Class Meetings—Edwin Waugh—The Stephens Family—Irish Famine in 1847—Foxholes—Greenbank: the Home of the Bright Family—John Petrie—Old Theatre and “League” Meetings—Secession from Wesleyans—The “Passing Away”	1-83

PART II

BIOGRAPHICAL

1821—John Mills’ Birthplace—School Life—Lancashire Dominies—Hugh Mason—Meeting at Old Sun Inn, Manchester (1842) — Alexander Ireland — Free Libraries—Goes to Rochdale (1844-46)—Condition of the People—“Rochdale began it!”—Carlyle—George Dawson—Critchley Prince—Wordsworth (1845)—Correspondence with Charles Mackay—Jacob Bright and Home Rule—Elihu Burritt—Frederick Douglass—Chartist Notes—League Bazaar at Covent Garden—Wordsworth (1847)—Dr. Hodgson—Returns to Ashton—Emerson (1847)—Esther Bright— vii	
--	--

	<small>PAGES</small>
Lancashire Public Schools Association (1846)— Ben Rhydding Memories—Miss Pipe—Selection of Letters	85-185

PART III

BIOGRAPHICAL.—continued

Marriage (1848)—Third visit to Wordsworth—Ashton- under-Lyne—Education Schemes—Nantwich—Old Town and Social Life in 1852—Historical interest— S. Harlock—Town Hall—Weston Hall—Hodnet— Market Drayton—Rev. F. Silver—The Marquis and his friend Thos. Bateman, Preacher (Primitive Metho- dist) and Farmer—“The Poet’s complaint”: a reply to Emerson—Visit of Louis Kossuth—Dr. Vaughan— Miss Pipe—Laleham	187-295
---	---------

PART IV

BIOGRAPHICAL.—continued

To Bowdon (1864)—First impressions—Musical centres— Banking—“Roundabout Club”—Economic Phase— Group of letters—“Credit Cycles”— <i>Manchester Ex- aminer</i> —“Northwold”—Emerson (1874)—Bimetallic Controversy—Death of Stanley Jevons—Epitaph to Brother: “His work well done”—Series of letters from Mrs. C. Cowden-Clarke—Third visit from F. Douglass—Founding of Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank (1872)—Retirement (1893)—Epitaph to John Bright —Letter from Mr. Gladstone—Last years	297-384
--	---------

APPENDIX	385-397
--------------------	---------

INDEX	398-403
-----------------	---------

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

JOHN MILLS . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
TINDER-BOX . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>page</i> 2
MINIATURE—ELLEN PETRIE, 1816 . . . . .	. . . . .	„ 11
MINIATURE—JOHN PETRIE, 1816 . . . . .	. . . . .	„ 11
PHœNIX HOUSE . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>To face page</i> 12
MARGARET . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>page</i> 19
FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM ELIHU BURRITT . . . . .	. . . . .	„ 22
“GREENBANK” IN 1864 (John Bright’s Birth- place) . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>To face page</i> 69
JOHN PETRIE, 1864 . . . . .	. . . . .	„ 72
ELLEN PETRIE, 1856 . . . . .	. . . . .	„ 72
JAMES MILLS . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>page</i> 91
“POET’S CORNER,” THE SUN INN, LONG MILL- GATE, MANCHESTER . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>To face page</i> 97
MEDALLIONS: ALEXANDER IRELAND, DR. W. B. HODGSON, JOHN MILLS (“The Triumvi- rate”) . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>page</i> 139
HEALEY DELL . . . . .	. . . . .	<i>To face page</i> 148
BEN RHYDDING (WHARFEDALE)—(Frith) <small>ix</small>	. . . . .	„ 157

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

*SWEET BRIAR HALL, NANTWICH	<i>To face page</i> 210
OLD MARKET HALL, NANTWICH	<i>page</i> 214
OLD BANK, NANTWICH, 1622	<i>To face page</i> 219
A PRETTY CORNER, BANK GARDEN, NANTWICH	<i>page</i> 220
*CHURCHES' MANSIONS, NANTWICH, 1577	<i>To face page</i> 225
*OLD CROWN INN, NANTWICH	" 241
NANTWICH PARISH CHURCH (Hill)	" 246
FACSIMILE LETTER FROM LOUIS KOSUTH	<i>page</i> 267
LLYN-Y-CAI ("THE LAKE SHUT IN")—(Abrahams)	<i>To face page</i> 291
LLYN-Y-CAI (Frith)	" 292
"NORTHWOLD"	" 343
FACSIMILES OF EMERSON'S AUTOGRAPHS	<i>page</i> 346
UNDER THE ASH TREE ("Northwold")	<i>To face page</i> 382

* From Hall's "History of Nantwich" (by kind permission).

PROLOGUE

THIS wonderful Nineteenth Century, with its joys and sorrows, doings and misdoings, gigantic achievements and sad failures, is dying! dying! Therefore is the air filled with "Reminiscences," "Collections and Recollections," "Chapters from Memory," &c. For the thoughts of the old turn fondly back to the earliest days, their hearts burn within them, memory leaps to pen and speech, and the world listens with eager interest, welcoming details and simple stories that a few years back would probably have fallen upon deaf ears and unheeding minds.

* * * * *

"Tell you a tale, my darlings," said Grannie, one Christmas eve, to the children, big and little, clustered around her. "What shall I tell you?"

"Oh!" piped a small voice, "you know—what you did when you was a little girl."

A chorus of assent followed. "And what grandfather did, too," cried a velvet-suited boy, standing strident among the girls, "when he was a boy!"

"Oh, you must ask him to tell you about that."
"No, no! He only tells us his good stories.
You tells us both good and naughty!"

With an amused smile, sitting, if possible, a little more erect than usual (for grannies don't lounge, you know; there was always ample room for one or two little ones to nestle behind her in the spacious easy-chair given to her by her children in the vain hope that she would give it orthodox usage), casting a loving glance around, then taking off and wiping the precious spectacles, without which she could not have distinguished a face, and laying her thin white hands upon her knee, Grannie began—



PART I
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

*EARLY CENTURY RECOLLECTIONS OF
ISABEL PETRIE-MILLS*

A



FROM TINDER-BOX TO THE "LARGER" LIGHT.

PART I

EARLY CENTURY RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER I

SOME six or seven years ago, the conjunction of a vivid early remembrance with a present contrasting condition, suggested the line at the head of this page as the title of a book which should trace, in parallel lines, the evolution—material and scientific, theological and spiritual—of this wonderful nineteenth century, now so near its close. Any dreams or ambitions of personal fulfilment of such a work, however, soon came to an end, not only on account of the pressure of daily duties, but also because of the lack of technical knowledge and literary ability necessary to focus intelligently so vast and many-sided a subject.

Nevertheless, from that time onward, one's thoughts, memories, and observations were constantly influenced by this idea, gathering around it various nebulous scribblings, written on the spur

of the moment, just to fix the fleeting recollection or relieve the mind, then pigeon-holed and almost forgotten.

When a fuller biography of the author of "*Vox Humana*" was suggested, the wish was the more readily acceded to in the hope that ever so simple a recalling of the environment of the middle-class youth of sixty or seventy years ago (such a contrast to that now existing) might prove alike profitable and interesting, and form a not unfitting background to the central figure of this memorial sketch. The unearthing of these scraps and jottings may serve at least to throw the glint of a yet living memory upon people, events, and conditions now fast receding into the region of an historic past.

It often seems as if the ductile and impressionable mind of one's childhood has, almost from the earliest dawn of self-consciousness, had stamped upon it a series of successive mental phonographs, each one sealed and rolled away into some remote corner of the brain, its existence almost forgotten in the stress and pressure of a long and busy life.

Now, however, sitting quietly and alone in the calm of life's eventide, the heart turns lovingly to thoughts of bygone days, when lo ! almost without one's volition, the roll unfolds, and incidents and scenes (for my phonograph could absorb pictures as well as sounds)—nay, even the varied tones and

accents of long-lost voices—are reproduced with startling vividness and accuracy. Alone, did I say? Nay, for the impression is strong that the dear comrade of over fifty years is, by some occult influence, standing by, and himself unrolls my phonographs, the while he bids me “listen and write.” So real at times is this conviction, that one involuntarily turns to look for the old responsive smile when some shared experience is recalled.

Rochdale, 1830.—How far back is one taken! I see a table in our mother’s sitting-room, surrounded by an excited group. I hear a voice, “Children, come and look!” Then we watch the unfolding of a newspaper, all printed in golden letters, its contents being a full, true, and particular account of the coronation of King William the Fourth. We are allowed to feel with our tiny fingers the big raised letters and crown. To have a whole newspaper about one’s self printed in letters of pure gold was royalty indeed!

Again, the dead of night. An impatient voice calls, “Bring a light! mother is ill; be quick!” Some one replies, “The tinder won’t burn; I can’t get a spark!” Click, click, click goes the flint; at last comes a tiny spark; then first the brimstone match and then the dip candle is lit. That was the process in 1830. A grope for the tinder-box, strike the flint till the sparks fall, then gently blowing

upon the tinder apply a 4-inch-long stick tipped with brimstone, and as a rule the greater the haste, the more the sparks refused to come, or the tinder ignite at one's bidding. *Now*, you touch a button, and a hall, a house, a street, nay, a whole town flashes into light! And a yet greater marvel, ring a bell, speak, and the same leashed lightning quickly conveys your words over hundreds of miles. Prophecy is fulfilled—"Puck's girdle clasps the world."

It is doubtful whether the much be-lighted young folk of this day could find their way in the dark about a house, putting their hands on any given article, in the ready, unhesitating fashion that we had to do it. We were not permitted to carry lamps or candles about the house; if on a winter's evening a book or any forgotten article were wanted, we had to fetch it in the dark. Not to keep our clothes in certain parts of the drawers, or books on a shelf, so that we could lay our hands on them in the dark, was to be dubbed untidy and shiftless. At the top of the stairs was an opening to a long passage that led to dim and mysterious attics. Past this opening some of us would fly breathlessly, with a vague dread of some unseen presence. What a relief it was when our ever busy brother Joseph one day put up in the lobbies and on the stairs small brackets, on each of which stood a glass tumbler filled three parts with water and a fourth with oil,

on the surface of which floated small round bits of cork with a tiny wick in the centre. When these were lighted after dark the house was illuminated, and we kept on running up and down stairs to enjoy the brilliance. Not so very long after this gas lights were introduced, but they made no such impression as did those welcome little oil-floats. On those dark long winter nights the call of the old watchman was a great comfort, "Past one o'clock, a very fine night!" For us the phrase, "Watchman, what of the night?" needed no explanation.

Looking backward, once more, what do I see? . . . A group of children with fascinated gaze fixed upon the well-known "White House," which, standing on the ridge of Blackstone Edge, marks the division of Lancashire and Yorkshire; for from thence, slowly winding down the bleak moorland road, is an ever-lengthening, dark, sinuous mass—to our childish fancy resembling nothing so much as a great dark serpent, dotted with light spots—first seen curling over the ridge past the White Inn, and so creeping downwards till it disappears just before reaching Littleborough.

What was it? Why, just the regular train of pack-horses, bringing wool in sacks from Yorkshire to be woven into blankets and flannels by the cottage looms of Lancashire.

An added charm to us was the picketing of these

horses in fields close to our own garden wall, when the tired creatures were fed and relieved of the heavy packs (the white dots of the serpent) before resting for the night.

Now, a great fiery dragon rushes into the bowels of the earth in Yorkshire, thunders along beneath the very track of those pack-horses, and is in Rochdale in less time than it takes to describe its course!

The mention of the brimstone match recalls a rather painful object-lesson that befell me. One day, playing with a brimstone match, a drop of blazing sulphur fell upon my hand. Whilst dancing and screaming with pain, there came into the room a dear old minister, of the severest theological mould, but with the tenderest of hearts. Taking me on his knee, and comforting me with a kiss, I heard (and hear now), amidst subsiding sobs, these words, “My poor child, never forget this! If you are not a good girl, saved from your sins, a child of God, you will go to a hell of brimstone and fire! If such a little drop of burning sulphur so torments you, what will that be which lasts for ever and ever?” Terror of that thought was doubtless intensified by consciousness of an act of disobedience in playing with the matches at all. Poor soul! he was doubtless, at the cost of much pain to himself, only fulfilling his mission as he knew it. He knows better now; the “Larger” Light has long since dawned for him!

Happily for me, the keynote of our home was love—love human, love divine—and, despite many nights of broken sleep and dreadful dreams, the first effect, but not the memory, of those dreadful words passed away; and as with years thought grew clearer, they laid the foundation of an early rebellion against, and a blessed escape from, the doctrines of everlasting material punishment—of torturing seas of burning, unquenchable brimstone!

1834.—Another red-letter day was that which marked the emancipation of the West Indian slaves in 1834. A picture was brought home that was a never-ending source of delight. It represented a tall palm-tree, at the foot of which was a newly dug grave, a man with beaming face leaning on a spade, and a negro holding in outstretched hands long iron fetters in readiness to drop them into the grave; a mother, in a delirium of joy, tossing a fat baby into the air; and on a seat beneath the tree sat an old man, tears of joy running down his dusky cheeks, and by his side an open Bible; in the background the sea and a ship, and on the shore a group eagerly reading the glorious proclamation.

Doubtless this picture paved the way for the intense sympathy and interest we felt during the American struggle in 1861. After that time the man on the seat was to us always “Uncle Tom,” the mother “Eliza,” and the man holding the chains “Harry.”

Who is there that cannot recall some home-picture, the impressions of which, consciously or unconsciously, have coloured the whole bent and tenor of his life!

Behind the door of that dear, sacred sitting-room hung, framed in rosewood, the Proverbs of "Poor Richard"—a small sketch illustrating each wise saying. I think we were chiefly brought up on the Bible and "Poor Richard's" philosophy.

Here it may be well to give a short sketch of our home for facility of reference, both as to the short period of sixteen years covered by personal remembrance only, and the second (biographical) portion of this book.

The inmates of Phoenix House, South Street, Rochdale (built about 1820), consisted, in my childhood, of John Petrie, engineer and ironfounder, and Ellen his wife, four sons and two daughters—Margaret and myself—one daughter having married whilst very young. James, the eldest son, died in 1891, aged seventy-four. The second, Joseph, devoted to the cause of total abstinence all his spare energy and means up to the time of his death at the age of sixty-three. He was sometimes dubbed the "Intemperate Teetotaler." A Rechabite doubtless, for, open and hospitable house as my father kept, welcoming the young men friends of his boys equally with ministers and philanthropists, I never saw on his table any alcoholic beverage whatsoever.

Oh yes, I remember every spring we were sent out into the fields to gather young nettles, from which our mother made the most delicious nettle-beer! She was a clever, practical herbalist, and would be out early, gathering, whilst the dew was still upon them, various plants to use in case of illness, and she was often applied to by others for the use of them.



ELLEN PETRIE, AGE 30,
1816.



JOHN PETRIE, AGE 25,
1816.

The third son, John, and my especial companion, was of a literary turn of mind. In 1856 he wrote for the *Rochdale Standard* (afterwards amalgamated with the *Observer*) a series of six papers in the Lancashire dialect, signed "Sam Sondknockkur," which became very popular: John Heywood bought the copyright, and four editions were sold. In 1859 John, with Oliver Ormerod, Owen March, and

H. Moore, became part proprietor of the *Rochdale Observer* (along with Mr. Scott, father of Mr. Walter Scott, the present proprietor and editor), which is still carried on in a spirited fashion worthy of its ancestry, and with a degree of literary culture and fairness of tone, yet unswerving Liberal principles, resulting in well-deserved prosperity.

It was in 1859 that Mr. P. W. Clayden (late of the *Daily News*) was in Rochdale, and gave my brother John valuable help by his leading articles. Already, in 1850, he had met our father in connection with the work of the Anti-State Church Association, when he was Unitarian minister at Blackwater Chapel. My brother, who is now in his eightieth year, has done good service in the past in educational matters, and especially on Board School Committees.

George, the youngest son, is still living at Stone Hill, Rochdale. For some years President of the Rochdale Reform Association, he retired from active political life when his old friend T. B. Potter, with whose career he had been so closely associated, retired from the Parliamentary representation of Rochdale.

I come next to John in age, Margaret—long since dead—being the youngest child.

Only one side of South Street—a *cul-de-sac* a few hundred yards in length—was then built upon. One large house was occupied by the Fothergills,

[To face p. 12.]

PHOENIX HOUSE.



the grandparents of Jessie Fothergill; the next by the Rev. W. Stephens, Baptist minister (in whose house I first met Edwin Waugh); our school-mistress, Miss Walker, came next; then Phoenix House. Large wooden gates closed one end of the street, and kept private a path leading to Roach House, once belonging to the Holt family, but afterwards the residence of George Ashworth, whose eldest daughter married Mr. Hugh Mason, of Ashton-under-Lyne, and is still living. Beyond Roach House a stretch of open country led up to the brown slopes of Blackstone Edge.

I give these brief details, not supposing them to be of wide interest, but rather to save digression farther on, as in one fashion or another many of the inmates of these houses came, sooner or later, into touch with the life of John Mills.

A short time ago, when going through some fine municipal baths, I was forcibly reminded of the difficulties in the way of even well-to-do people getting baths of any kind, much less baths for swimming. The rivers, the wells, and the pumps were the only resources; even the colliers' annual "wesh" at the seaside being unattainable in those days of no railways and costly mail-coaches. It may be imagined, therefore, that we were rather proud of our own private swimming-bath. My father, always an advocate for hydropathy, set to work. In a field close to the side of the house a

large hole was dug, which was lined with riveted boiler-plates, brought from the foundry, and put together on the spot. When finished, and painted white inside, it formed a bath some 18 by 20 to 30 feet, and a path round it was enclosed by wooden walls, half-roofed. A furnace and pipes were provided for heating if needful. Pipes were laid to the back kitchen, and a loose wooden trough from the pump to the pipes discharged the water through holes in the side of the bath. It was the filling that was the event and the fun ! The privilege of use being coveted by the boys' friends and our neighbours, the condition of granting it was that of coming to pump ; so behold them, half-a-dozen young gentlemen in their shirt-sleeves, taking turns at the pump-handle ; and they had to work hard for some hours ! Filled overnight, the next morning the place was early alive with sounds of laughter and splashings and shoutings.

Try to imagine it, you people, to the poorest of whom is granted the privilege of a luxurious bath —hot or cold—with dressing-rooms and towels included, all for a penny !

1840.—One memorable day two men entered our house, and carried off the dining-table and a copper coal-box. To our amazement, neither father nor brothers made any protest. The articles were to be sold for non-payment of Church Rates ! For a week or two we picnic'd in the front kitchen—we

youngsters glorying in the notion of persecution for truth's sake, but enjoying the whole thing immensely. There was some talk of imprisonment, and I think we were rather disappointed that our father had not to go to prison, like John Bunyan, for conscience' sake!

Our father was a man of peace, and so also was Jacob Bright, senior; and so they, along with Mr. Littlewood and W. Barton, went to the vicar and said, "We don't want our old parish church on the hill to fall into decay for lack of renovation. You are levying a three-halfpenny rate; call it *voluntary*, and we will pay a twopenny rate, and help you to get it!" The proposal was indignantly rejected. Then followed a stormy meeting of rate-payers, held in the churchyard. Dr. Molesworth mounted one tombstone, John Bright another, their supporters gathering round them. John Bright moved, "That the rate was illegal." A poll was demanded, and the voting went on every day for a most exciting week, beginning with a majority against the rate of 640, and ending, to our discomfiture, with a small majority in favour of the rate.

"What will be done next, father?" asked the mother on their return home.

"A meeting in our new moulding-shop tomorrow, to raise subscriptions to defend any one who is prosecuted for non-payment!"

"That's right! We must not give in!"

Our mother always backed up any struggle for justice with all her might.

1841.—Soon after, John Petrie, Edward Taylor, Thomas Southworth, W. Barton, Jacob Bright, and others, were summoned for refusal to pay the rate. The money for defence was ready, and counsel engaged, when, the charges having been brought, the prosecutors lost heart, and on the plea of some technical flaw in the drawing up of the summonses, they were dismissed by the magistrates. The return home that evening was a triumphant one. Up to midnight, one after another kept calling to shake hands and to rejoice. From that date, the rate was never collected in Rochdale, though it was not till 1868 that the Bill repealing it was passed.

When Napoleon died, my mother was about twenty-five years of age, and she would often tell us tales of those times. One favourite story we would get her to tell, in her own simple, graphic way, over and over again. Then, it was not “the black man up the chimley,” but “Boney,” that was the bogey. “Stop crying, wilt ta’! Boney’s coming, and he’ll ta’ thee to France!” In a village in Lancashire, not far from Bury, there lived a boy of some sixteen years, a “gawmblin,” half-witted lad, but with a certain amount of cunning and aptitude for paying out those who teased or laughed at him. The children playing at duckstones on the green, or sailing paper fleets on the pond, and the women,

standing about knitting and gossiping in the cool of the evening, were tempting game for "Jammy." He had somehow got an inkling about Bonaparte, for he wandered about the country, professing to sell herbs and bits of thread and needles in a basket furnished by his mother; and the kindly country-folk took what they wanted, and put what they liked into a little box he carried. It was all the same to "Jammy," whether it was pence or lozenges; often he was paid with a good meal, and as he sat and ate he listened to the talk, and thus caught something of the panic spirit then prevalent. The road through the village rose with rather a sharp ascent for a quarter of a mile to a ridge, and then sloped away on the other side, joining the main road towards Manchester. One evening, when all was calm and quiet, save for the ringing laughter of children and the low gossiping hum of the older folk, "Jammy" appeared on the ridge, and flying down with outstretched arms, cried, "Run! run! Boney's here! He's coming!" Down went sticks, hoops, and duckstones; children ran screaming to their mothers, who snatched up their babes, and in a twinkling not a soul was to be seen save "Jammy," grimacing and dancing with delight. "Boney" not appearing, the alarm subsided, and when next "Jammy" tried it on they were ready with, "Boney's cotched—he's i' prison!" And great was the rejoicing, till once again "Jammy," returning from his wanderings,

gave a new alarm, “‘Boney’s ‘brasted’ out o’ prison! He is fi’ sure! And he’s coming as fast as iver he con!” Once more terror reigned, and continued until after Waterloo; then they were sure “Boney” was done for, and in their joy at his downfall they illuminated their windows with innumerable rush candles.

So enamoured were we of the story, that we made it into a play, the terraced slope and shape of our garden lending themselves as fitting stage. Enlarging the story, we had Bonaparte himself, with his soldiers, dressed in any scarlet trappings we could muster, a black paper cocked hat, dotted with rich gold stars, for “Boney.” On “Jammy’s” alarm “Boney” came into sight; we disappeared, but only into ambush, when rushing out we faced the Frenchmen, chasing them down the hill as they fled in terror. Any caught before reaching a certain tree were made prisoners of war. This routine was not fixed until a violent quarrel had broken out, the first plan proposed having been that “Boney” and his men were to chase us, and take captive or kill us all. Indignantly some of us refused to join in such a drama. We were a company of some twelve girls and boys, all neighbours, and mostly school-fellows.

But whilst I was with the boys, playing cricket or duckstones (the favourite game), climbing trees or chasing Bonaparte to his doom, our gentle and

lovely sister Margaret would be, in house or garden, devoting herself to the amusing and playing with as many little ones as she could gather about her, telling them tales, nursing them, having tea in tiny



MARGARET.

cups with a party of dolls, of which she had a large variety. I only recollect one doll I ever had or cared for—a big wooden Dutch girl, forlorn and battered, who went through as many adventures as did we ourselves. She had been drowned, and

nearly burnt to death, and resurrected ; sent up tied to one of the balloons Joseph was so skilled in making, and had come down headlong, to be spiked on the garden railings. Not much was left of the original "Juley." John Stephens, so clever in turnery, often built her up again, made and fixed a fine new Roman nose, and put in a glass blue eye, which added greatly to the quaint wickedness of the yellow-irised brown eye—for all of which I was duly grateful, until a climax came and we quarrelled. Mesmerism and phrenology were just then attracting much attention amongst us. A Captain Hudson came, and made people do all manner of foolish things. He easily mesmerised Margaret ; I defied him, till he got out of patience, saying, "You are willing against me!" Of course I was! "David Elginbrod" was not then written, or much known of hypnotism ; but I hated the whole thing.

Then Dr. Beard came and lectured, and felt our heads, and we children were all busy finding out each other's bumps. One day John Stephens said that "Juley" (by that time almost laid aside) had a "bad-shaped head, and could be made much more intelligent looking." Thereupon he began taking off thin shavings from the back of her head ; I snatched her angrily away, exclaiming, "You may put some good bumps on if you can, but shan't take any off—she'll be an idiot!"

As we grew older, Margaret's love of little chil-

dren grew also. Ah! she grew up lovely as loved and loving, her Madonna-like face and sweet expression gaining all hearts. In 1849, Margaret, her father, John Petrie, Clara Lucas Balfour, Joseph Crosfield, and Elihu Burritt went together to the Paris Peace Congress.

It was then that my sister and Elihu were greatly drawn to each other, and seemed inseparable. We all thought that she would certainly have returned with him to America as his wife, but, attached and sympathetic as they were, it was not to be. When he first knew her, in 1846, she was but a child of fourteen summers, and throughout our constant correspondence, up to 1848, he rarely spoke of her to me save as "your sweet little helper."

I had a high regard for him, but she would have laid down her life, if needs be, to further his aims, and to a great extent, after I left home in 1848, she took up the "Olive Leaf" and "Ocean Penny Postage" work. For two years they corresponded, and they met (I believe for the last time) in 1851, at the Great Exhibition in London. He left England in 1852. Margaret married, in 1854, Mr. Kipling, of Darlington. She died in 1874, leaving one daughter and two sons.

Elihu died a bachelor.

Here, perhaps, will most aptly come in some notes of our daily school life, with its inevitable course of "Mangnall's Questions," and "The Use

Bandon, Ireland, Feb 18
1847

Mr Chene Isabell

Here I am in

this land of wan misery and woe.
I am in the midst of scenes that
would melt a stony heart to sympathy
& have been out among the cabins, dark
habitations of want & pale despair. But
I will not try to describe it. I am going
to Skibbereen, Bantry, & other distressed
districts, to see with my own eyes and
to describe with my own pen to my country
men, and to arrange for the appropriation
& the provisions & clothing that may be
sent from America, in consequence of my
appeals. Hope to return to England
the 1st of March, when I intend to
pass through Rockdale on my way
to Scotland. Till then

Farewell!

Elihu Burritt

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM ELIHU BURRITT.

of the Globes," which one has so often heard given as a satirical description of the teaching of that time. After all, it is the teacher who *educates*; and our Miss Walker, a dignified, handsome woman, with three large grey pudding curls on each side of her forehead, and a high comb, gave vitality and interest to all she taught. Two results I experienced, along with others. History in any form was a delight, and always has been—not only history itself, but the characters that made history, with their personalities, their greatnesses and meannesses, became familiar acquaintances. Often a book would be closed, and the time pass only too quickly as we listened, and, through all, the lessons of struggle—not for conquest merely, but for freedom, individual and general—were constantly implanted.

Then as to the poor, much-abused "Globes." One thing is certain. When out on a clear night there was scarcely a constellation that we did not know, and its traditions likewise; and one day I found a treasure, an old book of heathen mythology, which somehow had got mixed up with various big volumes of theology (Wesley's Works, Fletcher's "Checks," Baxter, &c.). This I devoured and made it my own, and more than once, when sent to bed, have I slipped out into the garden to gaze at the stars, and imagine Orion starting for the fight, and to wonder whether Castor and Pollux loved each other as twins should do; and I felt as though

one could stroke the golden hair of the Seven Sisters. The firmament was peopled with friends.

Shakespeare was a forbidden book, at least till we were grown up; certain selections—just enough to whet the appetite—being all that was allowed. One day I came upon a copy lying in my brother John's drawer (it was my duty to keep his clothing in order). This was seized upon, and shown to my special friend, who at that time was Anne Fothergill, an aunt of Jessie Fothergill. Her delight equalled my own, and away we hied at noon to their garden, climbed an old oak-tree, which, thick leaved and spreading, with many favourite forked branches for seats, hid us completely from view. We opened the precious volume at "The Tempest," and it was only the cry of searching voices that awakened us to the fact that, instead of two o'clock (school time), it was past three! When all was quiet we slipped down, hiding the book in a hole in the tree, and timidly stole into the school-room. Of course we were duly punished. When questioned, we said we were reading a tale, and did not know how late it was. Luckily, "What tale?" was not asked! There was no more playing the truant, but for a week after that every spare moment was seized upon. Up by five o'clock, stealing quietly out, we sat on our perch in the dewy summer mornings, and read the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" and the "Merchant of Venice." We got frightened, and the book

was put back again ; a few days afterwards it had vanished.

Our light reading was very limited. Fiction was classed with such worldly dangers as theatre-going, balls, and cards. The Primitive Methodists were, I recollect, very strong objectors to novel-reading of any description—"Sandford and Merton," and perhaps "The Fairchild Family," being just tolerated.

A startling instance of the difference between "Then" and "Now," occurred a short time ago at Blackpool. One day opening the "Visitor," we read a report of a Conference then sitting there of Primitive Methodist ministers, at which papers upon various subjects were read and discussed, the principal one the day before being upon "The Writings of Marie Corelli!" Looking for criticism, I found only the warmest appreciation and approval, with expressions of "How much they owed to her for her steadfast upholding of certain vital truths." It was a revelation, and I found it difficult to realise this great change of standpoint—the fifty years' march from "Sandford and Merton" and "The Fairchild Family," to "Barabbas" and "The Romance of Two Worlds."

Many conjectures have been made as to John Bright's earliest ventures in public speaking ; there is no doubt that these were made in advocacy of the temperance cause. About the year 1832, several young men—among whom were my three elder

brothers, John Bright, Oliver Ormerod, and Thomas Booth—formed a Rochdale Juvenile Temperance Band. Their plan was to set off on summer evenings to walk to outlying villages, such as Smallbridge, Whitworth, Lower Place, &c. In the winter they held meetings in such rooms, barns, or schools as they could procure. Of one such meeting Oliver Ormerod himself gave the following account to my brother, George Petrie. He (Oliver) was chairman. When it came to Bright's turn to speak he had somehow got his notes all mixed up, and was quite confused. Seeing this, Oliver, giving him a hint to sit down, said, "Now we'll sing a good temperance song!" When half through he whispered to Bright, "Just leave your notes on the form, and say whatever comes into your head." John Bright followed his advice, and after one or two very deliberate sentences he got into the swing of it, and made a capital little speech. That was his first speech made without notes, the first really extemporaneous speech he ever made.

Only this week (May 1898) I received from my brother John (now in his eightieth year) a clear account of another meeting at Whitworth. There was amongst us a tradition that these lads had once got into a scrape by taking French leave, and using the foundry horses and a gig belonging to the Brights' mill to take them to the more distant country places. He writes, "I was at a meeting at

Whitworth when I was a lad. How I went I do not remember, but I have a lively recollection of how I got home! There were present my brother James, who had taken a foundry horse and saddle, John Bright, Oliver Ormerod, and a Mr. H—, who was to give his maiden speech. These three had driven up together in a gig belonging to the mill. It was a fearful night as to weather. Mr. H— occupied himself for the half-hour before business began in walking to and fro, repeating to himself the opening sentences of his address. When called upon by the chairman (Mr. Bright), judge of our surprise when his first words were, ‘Mr. Bright, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Little did I think when I entered this room that I should be called upon to address you on this interesting subject’!! Then he sat down. I shall never forget that night! The downpour was terrible; I think I had walked there, but how to get back? The gig only held the three with close packing. We at length decided that I should ride behind my brother James. I did so, and suffered enough for some days after. We all got home wet through and through. But my mishaps were not yet over, for in taking off my wet garments I threw them over the rail at the stair head, when my watch slipped out of the pocket and fell smashed to pieces to the foot of the stairs! These are things deeply to impress the mind of a boy. I went to many other meetings with John

Bright and Ormerod, but never to another like that!"

In 1838 David Hewitt came to Rochdale as pastor of the Congregational Chapel, and soon afterwards married Mary Walker, the beautiful younger sister of our good governess. He was of a type then very rare—one who did not lose the man in the minister, whose ideas of the duty of a Christian citizen minister were broad and practical. Deeply religious, strong, wiry, active, he threw himself heartily into all the then seething movements for progress and the furtherance of national righteousness—the Franchise, Repeal of the Church Rates, Free Trade, Educational projects, &c. ; yet it has been said of him that no charge or complaint of neglect of his church and pastoral duties was ever made against him. He infected his people with his own enthusiasms.

There were, of course, plenty of people to say, "What has a parson to do with politics?" "Let the cobbler stick to his last"—and so on. His zeal for the temperance cause soon led him to join and eventually lead the juvenile band of workers already described. He would accompany them on fine summer evenings into the country. They would march along, my brother Joseph, who had not much gift of speech, proudly filling the post of bellman, every now and then ringing loudly a big dinner-bell filched from home. Then when a small crowd of loungers had gathered about them, a halt was called,

a borrowed chair doing duty as rostrum ; and first John Bright would mount, for he *would* speak before, and not after, his friend David, whose power of speech, fluent and rapid, made the rest shy of following him. All this and more is gathered from the accounts Joseph would give when he returned home, excited and delighted. "Joe," asks his mother, "whatever hast thou been doing with that bell?" "Calling folks together. And John Bright and Mr. Hewitt have made rare good speeches! We've got a lot of pledges signed to-night!" These excursions were well known at the time, and much talked of, but I have never met with any printed record of them.

My brother's account of the last incident amused us greatly, and I wrote most of it down at the time, especially as it brought in a well-known village character. "What is it now, Joseph?" for whilst eating his supper he began to laugh heartily. "Only something 'Mat' said when the chair broke down!"

Now "Mat" was something of an original—a big, burly collier, with a stolid face and a twinkling eye, who boasted "a lang pedigree"—Matthew O'Bills, O'Jones, O'Samuels, O'Browns, *i.e.* Matthew, son of Bill, son of Jones, &c.—his village distinction being his marvellous power of absorbing untold quantities of beer, "'bout so mitch as turning a' 'air!" Once, when a lad, he was made very ill from drinking

spirits, and thenceforth never touched them again. Mat was a bit of a Pharisee; he put on his phylacteries, not for what he did, but for what he did not do. "He'd more sinse nor pis'n hissel wi' speerits, and get drunk, and ma' a beast of hissel!" "Did he spend a' his wage on drink?" "Not he!" Mat had a fine sense of fairness, and every Saturday, without fail, he went home, put down half his earnings, with "Here, Sally lass, here's th' 'arf. Arf an arf; fair play's a jew'l, thou knows." "Yes, Mat," and Sally meekly pocketed her "'arf." If he earned ten shillings, Sally got five to carry on for food, clothing, and rent, for herself and children; if a pound, she was passing rich on ten shillings. But the little slender wife, who hardly reached Mat's elbow, was a bright, active, industrious woman, and clever with her needle; so, by making frocks for the children and dresses for their mothers, she managed to keep a tidy, comfortable little home, with its dresser and pots, and gaily painted tray, shining in the firelight. I purposely say "frocks," for I well remember the distinction made. To say, "Hoo nobbut ma'es frocks and bishops," meant only children's things; but "Hoo ma'es dresses" stamped a higher position—a "gradely" dressmaker. Now Mat condescended to be very proud of his home, and when he had "weshed hissel'" and had his "baggin'," and given Sally "'arf," he marched off to the "Wool-Pack," self-complacent and con-

tented. Another phylactery, for "didn't some o' them chaps drink all their wage, and leave th' wife and th' childer to clem?"

Well, not far from the "Wool-Pack," still standing, at Smallbridge, there stood, a few yards back from the road, five or six three-storeyed cottages, the attics with leaded windows all along, both back and front, to throw light on to the hand-looms. From each of the end houses to the footpath there ran a roughly-built long stone wall, so making a kind of enclosed space, with a pump in the centre. In this rude auditorium, with the blue summer sky above, and the brown moors behind, the little band would halt, my brother Joseph ringing his bell hard till red in the face. Out would come the inmates, the good woman bringing her wooden chair. Invariably then, Mat came lounging slowly across, and leaning his big body against the wall, with a short black pipe in his mouth, listened to the speaking; and if one described the miserable home of the drunkard, Mat applauded by mighty resounding slaps on his knee. If the drunkard himself was pictured, ragged and reeling, again would Mat nod his head and applaud, now and then giving speech, "That's reet, John!" "Give it 'em, David!" "They owt to be sham't o' theirsens!" "He was never drunk, not he"; but then he could go on imbibing long after his chums had lost both their senses and their balance. If his own little well-

happed children were about, he would look at them as much as to say, "Ther's no rags theer." This sometimes riled the women, who would call out, "It's noan o' thy 'arf, Mat, as does it." His only way of noting this chaff being to lift his little one on to the wall, with a half-pitying smile that vexed them all the more, as the child showed off the warm knitted socks and little clog-shoon with their bright brass clasps, for he knew well enough that many of them, poor souls, would have been only too thankful to be sure of "'arf."

But to return to the special evening when the chair accident happened. John Bright's Quaker sedateness enabled him pretty easily to stand quietly and talk vigorously, but David's mercurial temperament led to many side slips and narrow escapes—and this time down he came with an awkward tumble, smashing the chair to pieces, and lay prone and slightly stunned on the ground. With stentorian voice, yet stolid, gravest countenance, Mat cried out, "Eigh, David! a'm feart thou's had a soop t' mich! Canst git oop? Thou'l hae to tak th' pledge agen! Thomas, wheer's th' pappers?" (Thomas Booth carried the pledge-cards.) The people laughed mightily. David got up, and when he had washed his face at the pump, no one laughed more heartily than he did. It was then that a woman came out, bringing a good, solid, wide-bottomed Peggy-tub, with "Here, stan' o' that! It's a deyl

betther nor a racketty cheer!" Thenceforth a Peggy-tub was the fashion as pulpit.

Just another touch or two before saying good-bye to Mat. He was good-natured after a fashion, and if, on turning out at closing-time, a man seemed too "wambly" to get safely down the five or six unrailed steps leading into the road, Mat would get hold of him till they reached the bottom step, then leave him. But sometimes, if very far gone, Mat would say sharply, "Heer, get howd, wilt ta!" and pioneer his chum along the rough, pitch-dark street to where a twinkling window-light told of an anxious waiting wife; the door open, Mat, with a careful shove, said, "Neaw git in, thou arrant foo!" then with steady step turned homewards. Yet the "arrant foo" had probably not swallowed a fourth as much as Mat had disposed of. Then he did not swallow quite all his "'arf." A clever little terrier, well kept and cared for, was his companion on the ratting bouts he and his chums often enjoyed along the banks of the Roach. Nor did he lack some sense of parental responsibility. Every Saturday on his way to his inn (for he would not trust himself to put off his purchase) he bought three ha'porth of mint-toffee "bull's-eyes," each ha'porth twisted up in a separate bit of paper, dropped them into his capacious back coat-pocket, and went on his way. "Owd Gammer Jenny," who, by the making of girdle cakes and muffins, and sundry species of toffee

and gingerbread, eked out just enough to keep body and soul together and—great achievement!—find salvation from the Union, never failed to look out for Mat, have the papers ready, and give him a nod, with “Si thi’, that theer’s for th’ little ‘un!”—“that theer” being a bit fatter than the other twists.

On Sunday morning Mat lay in bed pretty late, and when Sally had sent the three bairns toddling off to school, she always went to Mat’s coat, took out the twisted papers, and dropped them into his Sunday coat-pocket (that well-kept, well-brushed Sunday coat, relic of their wedding-day, some eight years ago, which Mat never dreamt of venturing to wear without Sally’s consent). The simple dinner over, Mat would take his bonnie curly-haired “little ‘un” on his knee, and, looking rather sheepish at the mother, say, “Eh, childer, wat’um yo think feyther’s geet for yo to-day?—Con to guess, mother?” “Neawe, a’ canna.” Impatient, the boy cries, “Ah know!” “Howd a bit—whot is’t, barn?” “By’s eyes,” lisped the child. “Well done, little ‘un! Thou’rt a cliver ‘un!” A dive into the coat, and out come the little twisted papers, “little ‘un” getting the fat one. Sunday after Sunday was this tender little farce enacted. Then Mat, whistling to his dog, turned out, and the mother again, before “siding up,” set the children off to the Sunday school with “Neaw, y’re nobbot to eat one till schoo’s loosed, mind yo!”

If my patient—or perhaps, ere this, impatient—reader will permit, I would fain take him one summer Sunday afternoon for a stroll towards the moors. Our path leads behind the houses, past the white schoolhouse (whence comes through the open windows a hum of voices), and across the fields to a stile leading right on to the heather; the peaceful spell of a moorland scene, broken only by the occasional *whirr* of a moor-hen's wings, and the song of the mounting lark, falls upon us, and we sink to rest on a grassy cowslip-carpeted bank. Soon a fit of, I fear, very drowsy meditation is suddenly disturbed, and the startled air resounds with joyous ringing voices. For “schoo's loosed!” and looking back, we see the little children rushing aimlessly about, in the abandon of release and of joy in the sunshine. Presently a party of them run past us, over the stile, and up the sloping moor-side, towards a favourite spot, where sundry jutting stones make seats by the side of a clear rippling rill, from which, with little hands, cup-fashioned, they quickly quench their summer thirst. Let us follow them. Getting near, we see a queer process, a diving down into the little tied-on under pockets, the laying down on a stone of sundry white twists of paper, the contents of which, by a vigorous blow with another stone, are broken up and divided into many coveted prizes. We also will sit down at a little distance, but within earshot, and, if we have eyes to

see and ears to hear, what a little world's epitome is before us! In this group of little ones we may watch the play of passions and motives that, in a larger sphere, have moved the springs of action! Here be patronage and servility; selfishness defeating generosity; intrigues and toadying (see that chubby little four-year old lad with an arm round "little 'un's" neck, whilst she puts a piece of the sweet into his mouth!); favouritism and dislike; simulated independence and self-respect—watch that older girl walking away with upraised head, but not so far off as not to hear and respond to a call "to come and 'ave a piece!" All just as both then and now, in the "Salon"; in "Parliamentary back-stairs"; "political society," with its receptions and "At-homes"; in ecclesiastical high places—nay, everywhere where Mrs. Grundy holds sway, or where prizes—be they but baubles—are to be won! As it was in the days of the tinder-box, so is it now—has ever been—and will be! Nay, has not the tendency of all this material progress and addition to our powers rather been to intensify greed, passion for power, and the "lust" of life? If this be so, where then is the "Hope of the world"? Surely in the march of spiritual evolution, which, with steady and unfaltering step, has more than kept pace with that of the material and physical! Yes, this Hope (sure and certain) is in the vivifying rays of light streaming from an uplifted Cross, ever becoming brighter and

clearer, penetrating and illuminating the darkest corners of the earth, lengthening, widening, until there shall be no more "broken rays," but, all blending, shall complete the glorious shining halo, which, "the Temple in the midst thereof," will, with a force transcending all mere material evolution, save and lighten the whole world ! Let the pessimists—let John Watson, the wings of whose muse, true poet as he is, are so weighted in their upward flight by the burden of the great mystery—take heart—"For,

Somewhere, rooted in the tracts of Time,
Yet towering o'er the cloudy range
And all the belts of elemental change,
There stands a Mount of God sublime,
Crowned with His rose of light,
That knows nor day nor night ;—
And men that gazed afar
Have sometimes its true radiance seen,
Though dimmed or warped by mists between
To crescent, cross, or star,
And mortal grew immortal with the sight !
And could we higher climb, and higher,
To purge our vision with that fire,
The close reticulate threads of Natural Law
That stifled us before with fruitless awe,
Should lucid grow as the fine films of dew
Hung over autumn woods when morn looks through,
And we should front their semblance without fear,
Meeting the glance of God, that makes all clear."

Llyn-i-cai, "Vox Humana," 1859.

David Hewitt, being obliged for the sake of his wife's health to go south, left Rochdale in 1850.

Long remembered in Rochdale, as a pioneer for good, he was a prototype of one who arose somewhat later in Manchester—our fearless, staunch, and true Dr. M'Kerrow. I say “our,” for he belonged not merely to his own church, but to the community at large. He, too, had to endure remonstrance and slight, and cutting speeches, often from contemporary ministers—he was “going out of his legitimate sphere,” “weakening his spiritual influence,” &c. Fearlessly and steadily he went on his way, and long before his death had not only silenced opposition, but given courage and heart to many rising young men to follow in the same lines, and bring their religion into everyday and civic life. Truly a pioneer; one marching through the wilderness, clearing the way for the grand culminating movement seen to-day in the “Federation of the Free Churches”—a movement destined, we believe, to be a great, if not the greatest, factor of the coming century in making for righteousness and the salvation of the nation. Yes, here indeed the “Larger” light shines bright and clear!

Mr. Mills and Mr. Hewitt became in after years good friends and co-workers.

I have already spoken of Phœnix House as it stood facing north in South Street, but from the south front we looked over a sloping terrace garden and far-stretching green fields to the clear windings of the river Roach, from the farther side of which

more fields, rising gently to the opposite ridge, carried the eye on to the outlines of the hills beyond.

It was a pretty valley—in summer bright with sunshine, gay with haymakers, alive with gambolling lambkins and browsing cattle. In winter also it had its charms—the floods came, and we often watched with breathless anxiety the rescue of drowning sheep, and heard the distressed lowing call of some belated cow, surrounded by water and not knowing how to escape.

Let no one go and try to find that valley now; it will be a vain search. The last time I crossed it was with John Bright in a railway train. It happened in this wise.

One day in 1881 I went from Bowdon to see my father at the old home. At Victoria Station Mr. Bright got into the carriage with me. On the way we had a pleasant talk about the Women's Suffrage Question; the year before he had sent me a letter on the subject. Of course he was opposed to it. At last he said, "There may be force in some things you say, but I look forward to the day when there will be 'Manhood Suffrage,' then, there being such a majority of women, we should be in for petticoat government with a vengeance!" "Are you sure that would be a misfortune?" I asked. "One thing *I* am certain of, the

time will come when good men, working for the social and moral elevation of the people, will give us the vote, not just because we want it, but because they will have learned the need and value of our help as citizens." He smiled, and said, "We shall see." I felt a bit nervous at first, for I always stood rather in awe of him, but we were alone, and he was so kindly and cheery, that I ventured to say just what I thought.

On my preparing to get out at Rochdale, Mr. Bright said, "Why get out here, instead of going on to Wardleworth?" Noting my surprise, he went on, "By the new line I go to Wardleworth Station, and walk to One Ash, and it's not far from your house." Of course I sat down, wondering; but when we turned off the main line, and sped over the arches across the valley, lo! to the left were chimneys for trees, bricks for green fields, only glimpses of the river, black and sluggish, all looking so dwarfed and ugly. "Oh dear!" I sighed, "what a pity!" "What is it?" he asked. "Why is the old valley so black and narrow? Why do the hills seem so small and low?" "Ah! yes," he replied, "so it is; things that loomed so large in our childhood are dwarfed, and what seemed of little moment then is now magnified to sometimes overpowering size and weight. Which," he went on musingly—"which, I wonder, is the clearer vision, that of the child or of

the man?" Here the train stopped, and we both got out. I quietly thanked him, when he smiled and said, "But thou wouldest rather not have come this way!"

That was the last time I ever spoke to John Bright.

CHAPTER II

To this day the sound of the shuttle brings a host of pleasant associations—not the deafening roar of a thousand steam-looms, but the clish-clash, clish-clash of the single loom in the weaver's attic. Smallbridge, then a straggling but growing village between Rochdale and Littleborough, was my mother's Bible district, not for the distribution of Bibles, but the collecting of subscriptions for the purchase of Bibles; and it was generally my mission to go round once a fortnight for this purpose. Some were ambitious to possess a big book, containing a family register sheet, "and 'at looked weel up o' th' dresser!" Others, a New Testament only; some young folks a little smart one "to tak' to chapel," each paying what was possible, from a halfpenny to a shilling—the collector having his book, and the others a card to keep at home. What a long time it took to complete the purchases! Three or four months, perhaps, for a 2s. 6d. book, and for the large Bible maybe a year. And what an excitement when it arrived!—a delivery leading generally to fresh subscribers. I liked this duty, but the charm to me consisted in the opportunity given for getting to know the people—

how they lived, and what they did, and what they thought. Many were the friends made. Then the walk in the morning sunshine, past blocks of cottages, and the pretty—yes, pretty—really attractive-looking unrailed cellar dwellings, which stood back from the road, the half-raised windows often gay with musk and monthly roses; to the doors of the houses above, some eight or nine steps led up. Gaps of two or three fields, or a wide lane between the houses, disclosed, on the right, sunny glimpses of the green Roach Valley. To the left one looked across Cronkeyshaw, up to the Brown Wardle Moors; in front rose dark Blackstone Edge, with the White Inn gleaming on its ridge.

In those cellar-houses lived mostly old folks—a widow, or an old man past work, always with plenty of time to talk, and delighting to be read to. All the way along, the sound of the shuttle was only rivalled by the singing of countless birds. Only one of the many stories that I remember must be told here. As a rule, as taught by my mother, I would knock at the door, then lift the latch, getting a kindly greeting, “Sit th’ deawn, lass, an’ rest a bit.” As we talked the clish-clash of the loom above went steadily on. Here dwelt Robin and his wife “Margit,” with two children. Alas! Robin was delicate. His pale face, dark eyes, and hollow chest told the story only too plainly. He had just got a Bible; for some time back he had been picking up enough to enable him to

read a little. Going up the rickety stair to the weaving attic, I would find him with the great beads of moisture on his forehead, hand on side, the treadle going, the shuttle flying. Glad of excuse to take breath, he would cease work for a bit. "For yo' see, miss, I daurna stop mitch; Margit frets so, and thinks as a'm waur nor I am." There was no time to teach spelling or reading in school fashion, so when "he did wish 'at he could read a verse for hissel," I tried to teach him. After learning most of the letters, and following with his thin forefinger the words, and repeating them slowly after me, he got hold of the 1st chapter of St. John. From poring over and over the pages when alone, it was surprising how much he learnt. He would say, "See yo', aw've fun th' same word i' lots of places; theer's love, and theer's God." "Yes, Robin; my mother says there's love and God everywhere." "Thou's about reet," and the dull eye brightened. There were two heavy hearts under that roof, each trying to cheat the other. But for Margit and the childer, Robin longed to go and rest from the wearying monotony of the loom.

One day Margit met me outside. "Eh, whot un yo' think! Robin says as I'd better start a little shop; 'at he has saved a peawnd or two, and I mun buy some bits o' things, threads an' buttons and sich-like, an' mak' toffee an' gingerbread for th' childer! How con I? Whatever is he after?" I

guessed, but said nothing, and went up to Robin, who, looking flushed and excited, exclaimed, "Eh, but a've got a gran' plan!—th' Lord's put into me 'ed!" Then he explained how "he'd worried till he were moithered, as to whatever Margit 'ud do when he wor gone, an' he darena tell her outright, she took on so!" So he'd told her, "Now th' childer were getting on, she'd have time to earn a bit, 'bout going out." Would I try to persuade her "at it 'ud be a good move?" Promising, and leaving Robin quiet and paler than ever, I told Margit it was a capital plan, and she mustn't put her husband about with refusing to try it. Still hiding her real fear, she, with averted eye, went on with her work. Suddenly turning round she began, "I canna mak' it out; it's a' nonsense, isn't it?" The words for reply would not come—only tears. One glance at me, and Margit, throwing her apron over her face, sat down, and rocking to and fro in her agony, yet even then intuitively stifling a cry, sobbed convulsively under her apron. Clish-clash, clish-clash overhead. "Come out at dur! I canna bide!" And so we went, and, sitting down in the lane behind, Margit had it out.

As a stone on her heart had this dread lain, but never before been acknowledged and faced. A brave, loving heart re-entered that cottage. I left promising to call again. Next time I went all was settled, and Margit met me with, "Here's th'

brass ; will yo' help me to buy in ?" " That's beyond me, Margaret, but come to my mother, and she'll go with you to the market." So one day Margit, in her clean white bed-gown and striped gingham skirt and little cottage bonnet, came to see my mother, and they went together to market, Margit returning home with laden basket, half-crying, half-laughing, " Eh, Robin ! a' niver thowt as one cud buy si mitch fur twenty shilling !" Margit wondered afterwards how it was she could not do as well when she marketed for herself.

A friendly joiner put a shelf in the window ; a little curtain was hung behind, and there was the shop in all the glory of smallwares of all sorts, and one corner gay with gilt gingerbreads and bullock's-eyes.

" Margit knows now !" said Robin one day. " It's aw reet, an' sh'll mak' a living, an' th' childer a'll help her — sh'll a' them, onyway." Here, at the vision of the " childer," Robin wept. At last he could do very little, yet persisted in feeble attempts to go on weaving, till one day the loom stood still, and Robin, sitting before it, had suddenly entered into rest.

On these weekly walks to Smallbridge I nearly always carried a little brown basket, containing sundry two-ounce packets of tea, neatly made up in white paper. Some were for definite old friends of my mother ; the rest were to be given at my own discretion—a great delight, and yet greater

responsibility. This, I have felt since, was meant as a training in discrimination and judgment, I always having to explain to whom I had given any, and the reason why. Now, many of these cottagers kept poultry, the sale of eggs and chickens helping to pay the rent; indeed, having the run of fields, street, and moor, the hens almost kept themselves. "Be sure," my mother would say—"be sure if any of them want to give you an egg or two for the tea, you take it and thank them—makes them feel more comfortable about it, you know." The cheapest tea being then six shillings a pound, costing nine-pence for two ounces, and an egg at the dearest a penny, the exchange was easy to manage satisfactorily to both parties. Tea, with a pinch of green in it, was the luxury then most coveted by the old folk, and about the most unattainable.

I learnt many lessons that summer—one, that innocent, real happiness, nobly-borne sorrow, and delicate unselfishness were of no class or station, but latent and living where least suspected or looked for. Then, once a year, I was *really* at home with the shuttle, for when quite a child I was sent in the summer to visit an aunt and uncle who lived at Chesham Lane, near Bury. Their homestead was of a kind now, I suppose, non-existent: a combination of farming, and weaving of the famous Bury blankets. The house stood somewhat above a rural lane; it had a glorious kitchen,

roofed with oat-cakes, and out of it steps led down into cool dairies ; through the kitchen a lobby, with its rarely-used front door, and porch hidden with climbing roses ; then a little sitting-room, with quaint oak corner cupboards. Joined on to the end of the house was a long two-storeyed building, the top floor reached by an outside flight of stone steps. There were two looms above, and two below. My uncle, his two sons, and a man kept the looms going ; the three daughters, Sarah, Ellen, and Eliza, had each a cow for their own managing and their own profit.

Year after year would the same routine be gone through on my arrival. A scamper over the farm ; a greeting to the horses, cows, and dogs ; up the steps to the weavers, then pulling my cousin John's coat till he got down the steps and into the parlour, I pointed to the oak cupboard. He knew well enough what he had to do, so, unlocking the door, and feeling carefully behind some precious old china, he pulled out three little books, "Beauty and the Beast," "Blue Beard," and "Little Henry and his Bearer." Snatching them out of his hand, away I flew to a seat in the thick hawthorn hedge, and gently rocking on an outgrown branch—blossoms overhead, daisies below — never stirred until all three (but "Beauty" always first) were devoured for the twentieth time, the refrain to all these delights being the sound of the flying shuttles close by. It was another

constant delight to climb those stone steps, get a little stool, and watch the wonderful growth of a blanket. My favourite cousin (John) showed me all about it, which was warp and which was weft, taught me how to join broken threads, and pull a string to start the loom. I knew what "lintherin" bands were, and helped to turn the big creel and wind the yarn.

How the ceasing of the looms intensified by contrast the quiet of Sunday! The long walk over field and stile to worship, was a pleasant change. "Beauty" being religiously locked up, there were only Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and sundry tracts to be had, and Young's "Night Thoughts," the favourite book of my reserved cousin John. His library was very limited, and the advent of *Chambers's Journal* was a never-ending source of pleasure and profit. I well remember his delight when he showed me the first number! Long ago the house was pulled down, and the looms broken up, probably for firewood, there being no longer any use for the "shuttle at home!"

Little wonder that when, some forty years later, my husband, after a long evening stroll in Dunham Park, brought with him and read to me, written in pencil on the leaves of a pocket-book, "The Loom,"¹ I sat astonished and touched beyond ex-

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 21.

pression. It was surely the apotheosis of my loom, of the shuttle, the clish-clash of one's childhood, stirring into life a thousand memories !

1839.—Two incidents seen from the terraced garden of Phœnix House, stand out distinct and clear. One fine July day in 1839, big flags were flying on the houses, we children having as usual sticks and small flags to wave, and all were gathered to watch the first passenger train from Manchester to Littleborough go past. True, it was half a mile across the valley, but the view was clear and uninterrupted, and the shouting and waving pleased us, even if we could hear but little. “Here she comes ! See the steam puffing !” And on she came, right through Newbold Gardens, along the opposite ridge, and soon disappeared by Bellfield.

Our grandmother had come to see the sight, but would hardly look ; the snorting, flying creature, dragging all those carriages, was “no cannie !” “made her tremble !” Seen at night, with the flaming smoke, and glaring red eyes, it was a horror—a fearful dragon, “likkest a devil !” Some months later, she was induced, after much persuasion, to try a ride to Todmorden, in a carriage covered, but open at the sides. Before we reached Littleborough, however, she begged for the train to be stopped to let her out, and on reaching the station nothing would induce her to go farther. And it ^{of} was just as well ; for she might almost have died

of fright in the Summit tunnel. Once more on terra firma, she said, "Thank God! Never again for me!" And she never did venture again; she "didn't want to tempt Providence, and die before her time!" being then only eighty-three years old!

One day, looking across the fields, we saw, hurrying along the farther slopes to the right, and up the cutting to the station, crowds of angry men on their way to draw out boiler-plugs and smash machinery. To the left, unseen by them at first, came a group of red-coats, who had been drafted into the town to be in readiness. As we watched them pass below the garden wall, the alarm was given, and away broke the mob, helter-skelter, some running away, some hiding in little knolls and ridges of a small earth cliff rising from the river-side. It was great fun to us to see their dodges; some passed undiscovered by the soldiers, and then when safe flew off in other directions—hunters and hunted. After all, this little mob was but a red-herring trail to decoy the soldiers from another part where real mischief and violence were going on unchecked. This was tried once or twice, but the third time in vain. These poor, deluded plug-drawers, suffering, and often wanting food, with a certain sense that there was a screw loose somewhere, were the dupes of pot-house orators bent on mischief, who persuaded them that to teach the

masters a lesson they must draw the plugs out of the boilers, not only at the mills, but also at the foundries which made the accursed, new-fangled machinery. Starving and miserable, they went about in gangs, forcing their way into houses, threatening and terrifying the inmates, and emptying pantries; but I never heard of the poor fellows harming or insulting child or woman.

Our brave little house-mother had no fear. In the morning, when the men-folk had left for the foundry, the doors and windows were kept fast, we sometimes acting as scouts. So it came about that one day, running home, we cried, "They are coming! —lots of them!" Immediately all went in, and the doors were locked and barred; but as about thirty half-starved, excited men came in at the gate, the mother, who had made her own plans, unfastened the door, ordering us to lock it behind her, and stood outside alone to meet and greet them. They stopped in surprise. Then, "Come on, lads, we're noan boun' to be done!" Looking up at them she said, "What's it all about? What do you want?" "We're clemming, missus!" "Poor chaps! you look like it." At that moment a side-window opened, and there stood on a sill rows of pint pots filled with good steaming stew—not soup, but stew, thick with the gristle and meat of many shin-bones. "Here! take your fill"; and "Tom," pointing to one of our own workmen skulking behind the

others, "please lift that clothes-basket through the window and put it down." It was filled with thick hunches of bread. Again and again were the pots refilled. Did they soften and express gratitude? No; not outwardly anyway; but they took all with rather a sullen air, as if balked of some set purpose of taking by force rather than receiving of charity. The first plan would not have hurt their pride so much, for there is a heap of the "stalk of carle hemp" in a Lancashire lad.

At last Mrs. Petrie said, "Now you can go, the boiler's empty." At this a queer look passed amongst them. Then one said hesitatingly, "You're a gradely good 'un, missus, an' thank you kindly!" and they all turned away. But the joke was too much for them, and they burst out laughing, and called out, "T'other boiler's empty too; wee'n just poo'd th' foundry plug out!" "More fools you," she said; "no steam, no work; no work, no wages. You needn't come here again, but"—relenting—"you can send your bairns to-morrow, you that have any." And away they went, roaring with laughter all the way up the street. It was the joke of the week amongst them, how they emptied the master's boiler first, and then the missus's.

But these riots were soon over; they were nothing to the Bread and Chartist's riots a few years later, of which more in another part.

CLASS MEETINGS.

"Throughout British Wesleyan Methodism the ensuing fortnight will witness the completion of the returns of membership. There is much dissatisfaction at the present method of numbering the people, no regard being paid to the large and increasing number of communicants who, whilst loyal to Methodism, conscientiously object to meet in class, and are therefore not enrolled."—*Manchester Guardian*, March 10, 1898.

The reading of the above paragraph, under the heading "The Churches," caused the looking up of a record of some rather trying personal experiences of class-meetings. Methodist Church membership then, as now, involved regular weekly attendance at a class meeting and payment of a weekly penny, and the relating to one's leader and class-mates one's own religious experiences. Before long this became irksome—nay, impossible—to me, if honest self-respect was to be maintained. Not for a moment would I desire to say a word against a system that has been, and doubtless still is, a real means of grace, a joy and a help to myriads of souls; but certainly to me this compulsory speaking (for in that word "compulsory" lay the root of the mischief) was only a snare and a stumbling-block. Certain phrases were soon caught up, and served to get one through the ordeal and veil one's innermost heart. On the way there one would think, "What shall I say to-day?" and a very compact little sentence, not necessarily false, would be arranged, only to go

completely out of one's head on entering the room ; till one day, on my way to the meeting, I cried out, "No ; if I were to tell these good people all I have thought and done this week, I should shock and scare them beyond measure !" With this I turned back, went home, and refused to go again. But it was a cause of grief at home, and led to many pastoral visitations and exhortations. I said at last, "Well, if I need not speak unless I wish to, then I'll go." "Oh," reasoned they, "that is not fair or right ; you hear all the experience of your fellow-Christians, and say nothing yourself that might help them, or show them how to help you !" (*Noblesse oblige*, I suppose they meant, even if they had never heard that expressive term.) "It's no use ; the moment Mr. —— turns his eyes upon me, with 'Well, sister, how is it with you to-day ?' I am just a lump of ice on a volcano—a dumb-stock !"

Talking to my father one evening (for to him one could say almost anything), a happy thought came, for I hated to grieve him. "Will it do if I go to the band meeting on Saturday evening instead ?" "Yes, child, so far as I am concerned ; but they won't call you a real member." So it rested. Ah ! those band meetings *were* a help and a joy, mostly poor folks coming in after or before their Saturday night's marketing—man and wife, tired workers, troubled, bewildered souls, full of longing for help and sympathy, touched with live

coal from the altar. *Their* relief was to get up, one after another, and pour forth in no stilted phrase, but with the eloquence born of a full heart, their homely perplexities, strange deliverances, marvellous answers to prayer, raptures of faith and joy in Christ—all this free, voluntary, without questioning or urging, and with generally half the company listening, and responding with "Thank the Lord!" "Glory!" "Praise His Name!" "Don't be down-hearted, He'll bring you through!" What pathetic stories were unfolded, unconscious heroisms brought to light—all, if sometimes rough and often in the raciest dialect, genuine, true, natural, almost their only outlet for strong religious emotion and instinctive cry for human sympathy.

One fears after reading the paragraph quoted that the leaders of Methodist societies have not made much advance, the light on that score, if somewhat "larger," shining as yet only through crevices and dimmed glass. In those days people got called upon much more quickly and severely for omission of class meeting than for neglect of the Sacrament. Even now it seems that, however regular their attendance at the Communion Table, only class members can be counted as Church members. To one's own knowledge, Methodism has lost great numbers of young people on this score, and Congregationalism gained.

Naturally in my frequent visits amongst the

working folk I became very familiar with the dialect. No idea of vulgarity ever entered my mind, any more than if one had been wandering in the land of "Thrums." It was strong, racy, expressive, and, I should say that, walking by Smallbridge, through Littleborough, and round by Milnrow (the home of "Tim Bobbin"), one would find about the purest, most genuine Lancashire dialect in the county. My father possessed a large early edition of Collier's works, and he would now and then have us try to read it; he himself not being Lancashire born, could never manage the accent. Sometimes three or four of us—John Stephens, his sister Laura, my brother John and I, along with Edwin Waugh—would by turns read sentences of "Tummus and Meary," trying who could read it most correctly and quickly, and we found it good fun and very amusing. John Stephens was a son of the Baptist minister already mentioned; he had met Waugh somewhere, taken to him, and used occasionally to bring him to the house.

In 1890, a year or two before his death, Edwin Waugh, who was then residing at New Brighton, paid us (that is, my husband, John Mills, and myself) a visit of a day or two at Bowdon. Both, as they sat smoking in the library, found much in their past intercourse to recall and chat about, but my husband was greatly amused by hearing us (Edwin and myself) plunge into recollections of incidents

which' occurred before he and Waugh had ever met. At the mention of the Stephenses, Waugh's face lighted up, and he went on and on telling old stories, and recalling long-forgotten days. We regretted afterwards we had not made some notes of that last interesting talk. As he sat there in his "Tam o' Shanter," one of our daughters made a sketch of him, a rough but characteristic likeness.

With what a flash the phonographs unrolled as Edwin Waugh spoke of the Stephens family! At the risk of unduly lengthening this part of my story I cannot pass them over.

The Rev. William Stephens, who was a Baptist minister, was truly, so far as I can tell, a "square man in a round hole," being by nature an artist with somewhat of a Bohemian tendency. A strong individuality, originality, and cleverness characterised, more or less, his six daughters and two sons. The mother was a born autocrat, always working, always scheming for the good of her children; but that good had to be accepted according to her own decree and after her own fashion, whether it was the selection of a dress, a profession, or a husband, none (her husband least of all) ever dreaming of questioning her fiat. All had an affectionate respect for her, but their father the girls just adored. He lived in his study—"study" they called it from Friday night to Monday, "studio" the rest of the week.

The walls of the house were covered with oil-

paintings, mostly life-size portraits. I never heard of his selling any pictures, or having commissions to paint portraits, but he had a passion for limning the features of those he loved, at all ages. Over the dining-room mantel, filling the whole space, was a drawing of "Blind Belisarius," for which he had received the prize of a gold medal, given him by the then Duke of Devonshire; and there is yet in the vestry of the Baptist Chapel, West Street, Rochdale, a portrait of Mr. Stephens painted by himself.

I have said that the street we lived in was built only on one side; opposite our houses a green field stretched on to Yorkshire Street; it therefore made a somewhat secluded and quiet promenade. Mr. Stephens often made use of it in the quiet morning hours and the cool of the evening. He wore a long drab dressing-gown kind of coat and a soft hat. On Saturday he would always come out early, pacing to and fro, with head down, shoulders rather bent, and with gravest look of utter absorption. He never saw us children as we played about, and we never dared to speak to him or cross his path—for we all knew that "to-morrow," as his daughter Laura would say, "was [pulpit day]." If fine, there he would walk till dark, then go into his study, and direct to bed. But, see him on Monday—erect, bright, with the usual kindly word to the children—nay, the very back of the long drab coat looked younger, as he walked briskly to and fro,—or in

the studio at his easel (for there was always a portrait in process) working away. Sometimes he would let us, generally Laura and myself, play quietly in a corner, or watch him painting. When tired of us he would, putting his hand into a little red box that always stood by him, give us each a handful of pink and white comfits with caraway seeds in, saying, "Shut the door after you." He never needed to say "go"; we knew what the rattle of the comfit-box meant.

He was a good, conscientious, pious soul, gentle and absent-minded; but the fruits of the Saturday walks must have been good and acceptable, for he held his pastorate for over twenty years, then slipped quietly out of the world.

One daughter, Eliza, married her cousin, Mr. Blackett, agent for the Earl of Bessborough, in Co. Kilkenny, and did a noble woman's work at the time of the Irish Famine of 1845. Another daughter, Sophia, who was very delicate, excelled in embroidery of every kind, and went with Laura (my friend) to Ireland to the help of her sister. Once when children we had a small home sale of work for the Good Samaritan Society; Sophia worked for it a beautiful baby doll's robe of exquisite fineness—it was one mass of work. During the sale John Bright came in with his little motherless girl Helen, and one of his sisters, which one I do not remember, but most likely Priscilla, who lived with

him until he married again. He bought the baby doll for two guineas, and little Helen (now Mrs. Clarke) carried it proudly away. That robe was a pattern for many a larger one, worked in Ireland and sold in England. Doubtless these devoted girls laid the foundation of a certain lucrative class of work yet done in Ireland. I have heard them express their astonishment at the quick way the peasant women picked it up, and above all how they would come with hands roughened by a morning's field-work, and delight in the delicate embroidery.

Tom, the eldest son, emigrated, and became a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Queensland. John, the bookworm, and skilled in wood-carving and turnery, followed his brother, and established a bookselling and stationery business, and afterwards aided in founding the now highly successful *Brisbane Courier*. He took with him a wife, Charlotte Henry, of Rochdale, whose sister married Mr. Scott, father of the present proprietor of the *Rochdale Observer*.

But I have not yet mentioned the one member of this unique household to whom we young people, her nieces, myself especially, and the Fothergills, owed so much educationally. She it was who gave us a glimpse of another world outside our narrow sphere. If ever there was a fine diamond, a jewel, in a rough ungainly casket, it was the soul of

Miss Blackett, the sister of Mrs. Stephens—"Aunt Blackett" we all called her. She was enormously stout, with massive head and features, square forehead, and keen, bright black eyes. Locomotion was difficult to her, and she would just walk slowly about, leaning on a gold-headed stick, trotting in to our house for a chat at odd times, in the neighbourly fashion we all had.

A beautiful, clear, flexible voice gave a great charm to her reading; in that busy household the womenkind were not so much *either* working or reading, but mostly working *and* reading. How often have I gone into the kitchen and found the mother perhaps shelling peas, a daughter making pastry, another perhaps sewing, and "Aunt Blackett" reading aloud—no sound heard but her mellow voice and a chirping cricket! If only for a quarter of an hour, it was taken advantage of. Then on a fine evening we would sit round her in the garden, and, young as we were, would think it a privilege to join the circle. "The Vicar of Wakefield," Goldsmith's "Village," "Stories of the French Revolution," "Rasselas," a quaint book called "Eyes and No-eyes," Pepy's "Diary," are amongst the books I well remember. But *the* book in which her soul delighted, and which always lay upon her table, was Boswell's "Johnson." Over and over again did she read to us such portions, such conversations, as pleased her, and she thought good for us; Mrs.

Thrale, Francis, the negro servant and faithful friend, Miss Williams, and Miss Burney, were all familiar friends. Miss Burney's "Evelina" and "Cecilia" prepared the way for a later keen delight, viz., Madame d'Arblay's "Diary and Letters," read aloud to us by Aunt Blackett. Her contempt for Mrs. Thrale was only surpassed by her love and reverence for Dr. Johnson. She had also a never-failing interest in the old aristocracy, especially of the court of the Georges, and when telling us about the "dear Princess Charlotte" the tears would roll very slowly down her cheeks, and we never doubted that Aunt Blackett was a personal acquaintance, and we felt ourselves somehow in touch with Royalty! How she, having lived always in London, could put up with our Lancashire ways, I never could tell. She, and an awe-inspiring sister, who now and then came down "from town," and who wore a real turban, seemed to us of quite another and superior order of beings to any we had ever met! Then how sweet, in spite of her physical disadvantages, was Aunt Blackett's temper! Now and then^{*} she went to a dinner party—mostly to the Butts.¹ There was only one

¹ The Butts was an ancient archery ground at the side of the river Roach, in the centre hollow of the town, much used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A red brick mansion, flanked with huge mills, stood well back from the river—this was the residence of Mr. Henry Kelsall, who, jointly with his brother Robert, was owner of the mills adjoining. They were an old Baptist family; a daughter of Henry Kelsall married Sir Morton Peto; a granddaughter of Robert (Helen, daughter of Dr. T. Melland) was the first wife of Mr. Asquith.



carriage in the town the door of which she could get through, and that was a tight fit. A foot-stool being brought out, one nephew would help her up, the other at the opposite side taking both her hands would pull, so, pushing and pulling, she would get seated. Now, we youngsters always knew when this was going to happen; it was an event, and we would gather round by the door to watch, for we liked to see Aunt Blackett resplendent in a velvet or brocade, and fine cambric neckerchief, fastened with a big cameo, and wonderful cap, trimmed with big bows and nodding plumes. Safely in, we even clapped our hands. And did she, as most women would have done, look black as thunder, and say, "Those impertinent, rude children"? No! No sooner had she sat down, after carefully spreading out her robes, than she would look at us beamingly, with a nod that set all the feathers bobbing, and gaily kissing her hand, she drove away in state! I thought it angelic, and that she enjoyed the fun with us; but perhaps she felt like Royalty condescending to an admiring mob—at least so some one said, and made me very angry! Anyway, I loved her, and always have held her in grateful, loving memory.

CHAPTER III

ARE there any memories that cling so tenaciously through life, and return with such fresh vividness in old age, as those of our childhood's outdoor life? Little restraint was ever put upon our wanderings? On half-holidays away we went, boys and girls, to wander at our own sweet wills, over the fields below, and along the river-side, or away towards and up on to Blackstone Edge, or "Robin Hood's Bed." People who live in the bosky Midlands, or the green lanes of Devonshire, are apt to think of this part of Lancashire as dreary, bleak, and uninteresting; but the very bareness of the moors, and the dark ruggedness of the land of stone and coal, doubtless enhanced to us the charm of the fairy glens we would suddenly come upon, coyly hiding deep down in the river rock, so narrow that at a little distance the passer-by would never suspect their existence. There was, and still is, "Simpson Clough" and "Healey Dell" or "Thrutch," where, far below, the tumbling Spodden fussily "thrutched"¹ its way onwards to join the "Roach." To reach these, however, meant long and

¹ Appendix, p. 390.

only occasional walks. But of all the near home haunts none could compare with "Foxholes Lane." Do you, my reader, ask here, "What is Foxholes Lane to me?" I grant you, nothing! So please shut your book for a while, close your eyes, lean back in your chair, and "look backward" . . . Where is the green coppice in which you are once more rejoicing? the bubbling brook, the burn, the quarried hill-side, or the seaside cove, in which, day by day, you and your friends played your little dramas, and lived your real life? . . . Roused from these sweet recallings you wake, perhaps, to find the book on the ground, the tears on your cheek. Methinks a fellow-feeling will make you kind, and you will re-open your book and follow my story, simple and disjointed as it may seem.

A few minutes' walk on the Yorkshire road, with a turn to the left, brought us into a short rustic road, or lane, with one or two farm cottages by it—the gardens rich in old-fashioned, mingled colourings—fuchsias, hollyhocks, roses galore, sweet-william, and lads'-love, with musk plants on the window-sills. What a richness of scent was there, a sweet smelling savour not yet lost! A sudden drop led down to the lane. "Foxholes" proper was the residence of the Entwistles, one of the old Rochdale families. The park wall bounded the left side of our beloved lane, and below it ran an irregular path, washed by the clear, rippling waters of a wide brook. Crossing

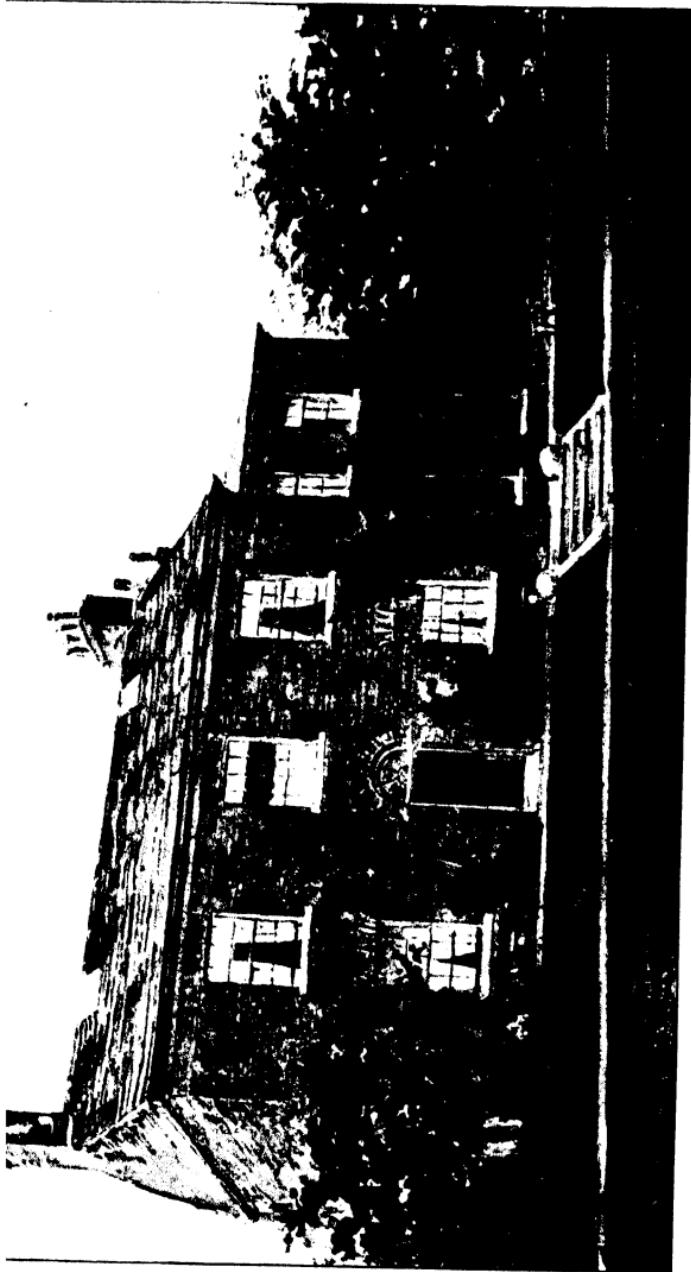
this—sometimes on impromptu stepping-stones, sometimes barefooted—we would sit on the opposite green bank, where grew blue-bells and primroses, and where stood a few old gnarled trees, fine for climbing. And here we would lie in the shadow of the widely overhanging birches and oaks, listening to the music of the incessant “caw, caw” of the rooks, busily building their nests, and fighting angrily for possession of some special branch. What battles they had, and how they scolded each other, the while we eagerly watched for the victors and the vanquished! But the struggle over, all settled down peacefully and went to work. We would each select a special pair, to see which would be first in completing their nest, and go over every day, triumphing personally, of course, when our pair won the race.

Here we crowned ourselves with daisy chains, had paper-boat races, paddled about barefooted to catch jack-sharps and tadpoles to take home to watch them grow into little frogs, and then tenderly replace them in the brook. Then there stood, some little distance inside the park, amongst the thick wood, two life-sized statues—“Adam and Eve.” This was the crowning romance of that delicious spot! Helping each other (indeed a few large nails somehow got into the crevices of that wall, making the climb easier) we would peep over in turns, and wish sometimes that Eve would be quick and give Adam that apple. What romances we wove around those two

silent figures ! Ah ! it was all "Eden" to us then. Tired of play, we would go on to the end of the lane, cross over a little flagged bridge (over which the fairies were believed to dance at nights), and come out within five minutes' walk of Greenbank, the home of the Bright family, which stood on the edge of breezy Cronkeyshaw ; and to the children of that household, Foxholes Lane and Cronkeyshaw Moor, and the large pond out of which rose a beautiful mermaid, were as dear, mysterious, and familiar as to any of us. My dear old friend, Priscilla (Mrs. M'Laren), to whom I had mentioned my attempts to recall some old places and events of our youth, writes to me as follows :—

"I remember the Thrutch well. I have tender and romantic associations with that pretty spot, and I am glad to hear it preserves some of its old beauty. Rochdale and its neighbourhood, and dear old Cronkeyshaw, all fearfully spoiled, and oh ! the road to Bacup, one of the quietest horseback rides I and Mary King used to take, is now indescribable ! Dear Rochdale ! and that sweet Foxholes Lane, the trees, the rooks, and the cuckoos in spring—where are they now ? Things of memory ; and when you and I are gone they will scarcely be remembered. Are you memorialising that pond on Cronkeyshaw, where there was a mermaid, the wonder of our childhood ? How well I see the comb with which she was always going to dress her fine, thick flowing hair."

Though in these early days my father was the friend of old Jacob Bright, and my elder brothers were joined with John Bright in temperance work, it was only when brought together as helpers in



GREENBANK IN 1846. THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN BRIGHT.

From a Water-Colour lent by Mrs. McLAREN.

[To face p. 69.]

the cause of Free Trade that I came into close friendly relations with the daughters, one of whom, Esther, became to me the dearest woman-friend I ever had. And deeply do I value the privilege of having known so well those sisters whose lives have so blessed their day and generation, and the brother Jacob, whose bright and honourable career I have, from our youth upward, watched with affectionate delight.

Of the old house, Greenbank,—now replaced by a modern mansion—I have a distinct mental picture. It was of a kind typical of its time, of which others may be seen in and about Rochdale—amongst them, on a smaller scale, our own house in South Street—built for solid comfort and homely life. A good shrubbed garden and drive led up to the front door, on one side of which was a large parlour, and on the other side a smaller room, a roomy staircase and wide landing window. Behind the parlour was a spacious front kitchen, supplemented by a good-sized back kitchen (not a slip of a scullery), with all conveniences for the rougher work. Then followed large airy pantries, a side-lobby, and a door leading on to the moors, giving ready access to the Brights' cotton mills, which stood close by.

The contrast between the working department of these households and that of the present-day houses must often strike an observer, and call forth the query, “Why is this?” Our miles of stuccoed

terraces and æsthetic villas, of from £50 to £100 a year, look very tempting. The pretty hall with its coloured leaded windows, the good-sized, well-furnished drawing-room, perhaps dadoed and cosy-cornered, speaks of ease and comfort, and you feel pleased with the progress made from the time of horse-hair and mahogany sofas and chairs, and glass-covered wax-flowers ; but open a door to the right, and you will find yourself in a tiny box of a place, by courtesy called a "kitchen." A closed heat-giving modern range, two or perhaps three doors, a dresser, and a table, between which and the walls cook can, if she be not *too* stout, just manage to steer safely ; and what between the range, the open windows, and the doors, she lives in a constant alternation of perspiration and draughts. As a buxom Cumberland cook once said, turning away in disgust, "That kitchen won't suit me ! There's not room to whip a cream in it !"

This change in the fashion of house-building tells its own story of the difference between the habits and lives of our mothers and grandmothers and present customs. The ladies then spent much time in their kitchens, not only superintending and seeing that all things were in order, but themselves helping in the cooking and making of delicacies, and the ironing of real lace tuckers, which lasted for years, now replaced by cheap frilling that lasts but a day. I said "helping" ; rather were they "helped" by

strong, well-trained servants, faithful and willing. Therefore had the kitchen to be made a fitting resort for the mistress—large, airy, dainty, with “a place for everything, and everything in its place.”

Mistresses who rarely enter their own kitchens do not realise the discomfort suffered or the risk incurred by their servants. Yet the legion of improved appliances now existing for lessening the toil of domestic labour ought to ensure, and does ensure when under the careful management of a woman with a head, greater comfort for the servant and more leisure for the mistress.

Well, Greenbank, Noon Sun-house, and many others one could name, were much alike in style and build. Before long, increase of wealth and of family, expansion of social ideas, of philanthropic and political life, led to the need for enlarged accommodation. And so, naturally enough, there grew on one side of the house a wing, containing large rooms below and above, with the addition of many modern improvements and luxuries. It was so with Greenbank. How often has that beautiful drawing-room been filled with gatherings of people whose lives and whose words have affected the destiny, and hastened the upward progress of the English people —nay, in some cases, even of the whole world!—the greatest of these being the eldest son of the house, John Bright.

To our own square red-brick house, also, was in due

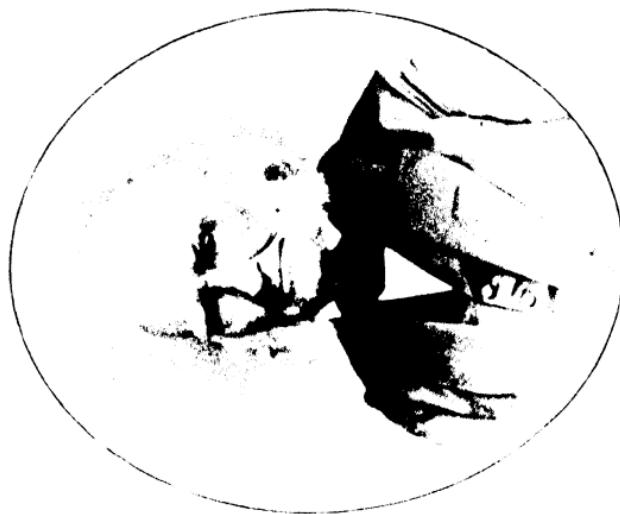
time added the inevitable wing ; but in this case more for family than social needs. I recall how, on the celebration of our parents' jubilee wedding-day, the fiftieth descendant, born in that year, was carried into the room. Save incidentally, little has been said here of our mother. She, with her husband, sat of course at the head of the long table, surrounded by their children and grandchildren. When the babe appeared a cheer was given. Then the eldest son, James, in a short speech, specially called on "Grandmother" to reply. After a moment's hesitation, she rose and said—

"With my hook and my crook
Came I over the brook,
And now I am spread into bands."

Bless God, and God bless you all !"

She loved the old paraphrased Psalms. How sweet and handsome the little woman looked in her black satin gown, half low in the neck, and fine muslin kerchief crossed over the ample bosom, a simple white Quaker-like cap, and black silk mittens !

I recollect that the vagaries of fashionable ladies sometimes vexed, sometimes amused her. "What could So-and-so want with different brooches to be worn at different times of the day? How have they the time to potter with such vanities?" Then, extravagance and waste were in her eyes evils in any one.



JOHN PETRIE, AGED 73, 1864.

[To face p. 72.]



ELLEN PETRIE, AGED 79, 1856.

Usually the housewives all went to market on Saturday mornings. One lady (the wife of a risen and very wealthy manufacturer) was a real trouble to our simple mother. Mrs. —— would come amongst them, dressed superbly after a costly style never before seen in our provincial town. Walking slowly, in a long rich black satin pelisse, trimmed round with a deep lace flounce, and lined with bright yellow satin, which opened over a white embroidered skirt, all furbelowed with lace, she was, of course, the observed of all.

When one day my mother, in her round hooded cloak, Tuscan straw-bonnet, and, it being muddy weather, ring pattens, happened to follow her up the street, and watched the dip of the rich lace and the thick satin sweeping the dirty path, she could not stand it. She was sure Mrs. —— did not know, and determined to tell her. But as she got nearer, and looked up (for she was as short as the other was tall) at the sight of the Leghorn bonnet, with a sweeping "Bird of Paradise" surmounting all this, her courage failed her, and so with just a side glance of pity and a very distinct ring of the pattens, she overtook and quickly passed her. If Mrs. —— did not detect impatient remonstrance in every ring of those pattens, she must have been deaf! We all laughed at her when at table she told us the story. Father remarked, "Better leave folks alone when you can't mend them; and she

can afford it." "Afford it! when the people are half-clothed, and more than half-clemming! Nay, not so, John!" He was only drawing her out, as he often loved to do.

Old Mrs. Bright would also, on a wet day, go to meeting in her pattens, and wear them about the house and garden.

Behind and beyond Greenbank stretched Cronkeyshaw Moor, on which, in 1846, was held the celebration of the Repeal of the Corn Laws.

The roll has unrolled itself; my phonograph is silent. To the memory of our father, John Petrie, would I fain dedicate the closing pages of this first part. How can he be described? One whose memory is still fragrant, and whose children are honoured for his sake. Of Irish descent (remotely French), born at Belfast in 1791, with a Scotch mother, he was a happy mixture of brightness, geniality, and Scotch level-headedness. From the time when, a young man, just married to the daughter (Ellen Downham) of a Yorkshire yeoman, he commenced business in a small foundry in Rochdale, he prospered. Short of stature, but well-knit, erect, of clear, slightly ruddy complexion, broad, with high forehead, laughing grey-blue eyes overhung by black bushy eyebrows, aquiline nose, and thin curved lips; his walk up to the age of ninety so jaunty and quick, that any stranger

following him expected to see him break into a run ; of so sunny and happy a temperament, that nothing could sour him, yet firm as a rock in loyalty to principle. I never saw him out of temper. One day when some fit of passion had shaken me he said, " Child, child, thou never see'st me like that ! " " That's no merit of yours, father ; it's harder for me to keep straight a month than for you all your life ! " He would only smile patiently at my vagaries.

He became a Methodist in very early life, as also did our mother. She would tell us how, up in the Yorkshire dales, her parents with others were caught up on the tide of John Wesley's fervours, and left the old parish church to attend the cottage and barn preachings he had organised ; and more than once, she would tell us with pride, John Wesley had taken rest and food at her father's house.

John Petrie's actions were consistent with the strength of his convictions. He took part in all progressive and Liberal movements, refused to pay Church Rates—with results already described—and was the principal means of securing Mr. Miall's election for Rochdale. He was Chairman of the Rochdale branch of the Anti-Corn-Law League, of which he was one of the earliest members, and the friend of and co-worker with Jacob Bright (his senior by sixteen years), to whom he often looked for help and counsel, and later of Mr. Bright's great son, John Bright, who, twenty years younger than

Mr. Petrie, in his turn frequently took counsel with his father's friend. It is told that John Bright, speaking of him once, said, "Whatever doubts may be thrown upon the reality of the Christian religion and its power, John Petrie's life would be answer enough for me!" Yet he never talked much about his religion—he just lived it. The Christ-spirit permeated his whole life—social, business, and political.

During Mr. Bright's illness, when he was staying at Llandudno in 1856, my father and mother were also visiting there, and we (my husband and myself) went to see them. I distinctly remember that we were asked not to speak to Mr. Bright, or recognise him as he walked on the pier, but to leave him quite alone. Even my father would walk aside, fearing to disturb him. But one day, as they were leaving the pier, Mrs. Bright came up and said, "John Petrie, wilt thou come in this evening for half-an-hour? John would like to see thee—only half-an-hour, remember!" After this he went, when asked for, several times. On his return we anxiously asked, "How is he?" "Improving nicely, and will soon be well again, but never I think as strong as before." "What did you talk about?" "Ah, that is another question," and unless it were to his wife, he never spoke of the matter. Be sure those quiet talks with his father's old friend were not of politics (a tabooed subject), nor of business, but of other and higher themes.

With no gift of oratory, any rare occasional words spoken by my father in public were short and to the point. One instance my phonograph records, with not an accent or a surrounding lost. How many now living remember the old tumble-down theatre in Toad Lane, and the first Anti-Corn-Law meeting held there in 1843, its dingy tawdriness hidden behind the packed forms and faces of an audience all on fire with excitement and expectation? John Fenton was in the chair, whilst on the stage were Jacob Bright, senior, John Bright, Jacob Bright, junior, Richard Cobden, Paulton, Milner-Gibson, and others. In the boxes sat many ladies, one box being occupied by the sisters of John Bright—a group of fair, earnest faces, prophetic of the noble future of some of them. Sophia, the eldest, was exceptionally beautiful; she married Mr. Ashworth, of Bristol, and died at the birth of her second daughter. The work of her two daughters, Miss Lilius Ashworth and her sister, Mrs. Ashworth-Hallet, for the "Woman's Suffrage" cause, is too well known to need remark here. Mrs. Ashworth-Hallet is one of the most gifted of our women speakers. The late Lord Selborne once remarked, "The cleverest speech he had ever heard or read in or out of the House of Commons was made by a Somersetshire lady;" and that lady was Mrs. Ashworth-Hallet of Bath, the niece of John Bright. "She possesses the oratorical power of her uncle,

both for argument, pathos, and satire." There, in the first flush of youth, sat Priscilla (Mrs. M'Laren), whose interest in political life found scope in the Anti-Corn-Law struggle, in fullest sympathy with her brother, and as years went on her efforts in behalf of the emancipation of women from the burden of unjust laws were untiring. Much has been done, much remains to be done; they who sow do not always reap, but she pathetically remarks in a letter to me, "She feels it a privilege to have been among the sowers." Also in the group was Margaret (Mrs. Lucas), the earnest temperance worker, who married Samuel Lucas, one of the founders of the Lancashire Public School Association.

John Bright's address moved the audience to a passion of feeling. Next Richard Cobden, with his calm force of reasoning, applied facts and figures, and his immense power of concentration and driving home of argument completed the work of conviction. Then came the finding of the sinews of the war which those present determined to wage till victory was won. It was said that nearly every man present sent up double the sum he had intended to give. One name, or firm, after another was read out. When the firm of John Petrie & Co. was announced, there was a special outburst of cheering, partly perhaps because it was thought to be rather a large sum for what was then a comparatively small firm. When the cheering subsided, Mr. Petrie

stepped forward and said, “Gentlemen, I do not know why you are applauding as though this was some act of generosity. We have an eye to the main chance, and simply consider this as the best investment we ever made !” This delighted both Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, and they both referred to it afterwards. Mr. Petrie was right, for the great expansion of trade in the years after Protection was abolished, laid the foundation of Lancashire’s prosperity in every department of commerce.

Mr. Petrie kept almost open house for ministers and philanthropists, welcoming all to his simple, hospitable board ; and so it came about that such men as Elihu Burritt and Fred Douglass were amongst the heroes of our youth. Along with the Rev. Robert Eckett, my father was a principal mover in the secession from the Wesleyan Conference in 1835, and he laboured unwearingly in the organising and building up of the large and powerful body now known as the Methodist Free Church. After the passing of the Reform Bill, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, he gave the most of his life to his church, and the furtherance of what he really had most at heart, the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church. He hoped to see this accomplished during his lifetime ; but this was not to be, so he left as a legacy to his sons and daughters exhortations never to weary in the work till the Church of God was freed from all State trammels.

Ah! the mills of God grind surely but slowly! His children have lived to be old men and women, most of them are now dead, and that goal is not yet reached; but it is well in sight, and to our children will come, we believe, the joy and the benefit of full fruition. Unambitious of riches, content with a certain moderate income, of which, from his earliest married days to the end of his life, he scrupulously devoted a tenth part to the cause of religion, he retired from business at the age of sixty, and for nearly thirty years after was busier than ever in quiet work after his own heart. In 1846, when fifty-five years of age, he had the only serious illness of his life. Strength and flesh were gradually but surely failing; he went to Harrogate, but only to grow worse, and one day he said, "I will go home and put my house in order; my days are numbered." On the journey home he was persuaded by his wife to turn aside and try Ben Rhydding and hydrotherapy. Dr. Macleod was just then getting into note. After a keen examination the doctor said, "You are as sound as a bell! Can you give me six weeks?" "As long as you like, doctor." A brisk course of Russian vapour and Turkish baths soon had good effect, as the whole mischief consisted in the almost entire closing of the pores of the skin. After six weeks he returned home with, as he said, "a new lease of life." When about seventy-five, he surprised us as well as himself by

finding one day that he was reading without his spectacles, the eyesight of youth having returned (an exceedingly rare occurrence). He began to use spectacles again a year or two before his death at ninety-two.

From the date of that visit hydropathy became the family 'sheet-anchor; and aided by its newly introduced and effective handmaiden, homœopathy, we bade a willing adieu to the old régime of leech, lancet, calomel, blister, and black draughts, with all their attendant tortures. Ever after that, if any of us were ailing, the word was given, "Off to Ben Rhydding," instead of calling a doctor, and so the whole family and following generations of us became disciples of homœopathy, and experts in simple hydropathic appliances; and a fifty years' blessing this has proved to be.

At the age of ninety-two, in 1883, Mr. Petrie died, leaving about one hundred and forty living descendants, to the fourth and fifth generations. His "passing" was as beautiful as it was fitting. Strength and memory failed somewhat at ninety, but only for a few weeks was he unable to go out into his garden. The last day is stamped indelibly on my memory. I had been with him some days before the end. Those days of increasing weakness were not merely peaceful, but bright. Often he wanted his favourite hymns sung, and feebly joined in such as "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,"

and "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow." Returning shortly before the end, I quietly entered the room. All were standing round the bed. Hearing or becoming conscious of some movement, he said, "Who is that?" "I, father; don't you know me?" "Oh yes, Isabella," and putting his hand on mine, he said, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," and closed his eyes. Again his eyes opened, and seemed to look searchingly all round the room and above our heads. "What is he looking for—what does he see?" whispered one. Once more the eyes wearily closed, and we thought he was gone. Suddenly his whole countenance lit up with an open, upward gaze of rapturous, astonished joy! "Ellen!" he cried, in a clear, loud voice, and he was once more with the wife who, living by his side for sixty years, had left him fifteen years before, aged eighty-three.

None who witnessed that scene ever doubted for a moment the near-felt presence of his "Ellen," and that at that last supreme moment he saw and found her for ever!

How rarely we realise the thinness of the hiding veil, and only at such moments do we get a glimpse beyond!

1845.—It was into the homestead I have described that John Mills came as a breath of fresh air, his wide culture, and unconscious gift of imparting his

own knowledge-seeking spirit, soon telling upon our circle, especially upon my brother John and myself, kindred spirits, who, ready, receptive, and eager, tried to follow in his footsteps, and became infected with his enthusiasm. He became a constant visitor until the time when, three years later we, he and I, left the old home to enter together upon the threshold of a new life.

PART II
BIOGRAPHICAL

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE

CHAPTER I

JOHN, the third son of James and Amy Street Mills, was born 16th December 1821 at Ashton-under-Lyne.

From the banks of the river Tame the upward slope of green fields formed a ridge, known as "Bank Top," on one end of which stood, and still stands, its glory departed, Bank Top House, then occupied by the Reyners, owners of extensive cotton mills. Next to this stood a smaller house, a sort of combination of homestead and farm; this was the birthplace, the early and always lovingly-remembered home, of the four brothers and their two sisters. At that time it was a spot where buttercups and daisies were at home, and lowing cattle found sweet pasture, now—nay, decades ago—swallowed up in the octopus grasp of King Cotton, and the valley covered with mills and smoke-begrimed dwellings. A railway runs through the old garden, and the bewildered Tame winds its sluggish, melancholy way in and out, under railway arches and alongside works, now and then taking an embracing bend round some belated remnant of a meadow, where the weeping-willow bushes hang heavily over the stream, as though shrinking from the remorseless hand that

soon will tear up their bared roots, and replace them with bricks and mortar.

The four brothers were all sent to the school of a well-known Lancashire Dominie, William Sunderland, from whose gates went forth many who have made, in their respective spheres, deep individual marks in the progress and shaping of the destiny and character of the Lancashire of to-day. A stern but just disciplinarian, rugged, but taking a tender, lasting interest in the welfare of his pupils through their adult life, William Sunderland, though not perhaps a very learned man in the scholastic sense, was a splendid and enthusiastic teacher of what he did know. His boys, well grounded in a general solid education, and especially in English history and literature, left him (generally about the age of fifteen) with appetites whetted for further knowledge; with minds eager and alert to discern the signs of the times; and with an interest in the movements, political and literary, of those stirring days, *almost* equal to that now taken in cricket and football.

One of the many pupils whose career rejoiced the heart of his Dominie, was Hugh Mason. From the time that he left school he went ahead in his own way; a man of inflexible will and unswerving integrity, with a passion for putting everything, big or little, into its right place, which, save for a strong sense of justice and respect for the individuality of others, might have been sometimes troublesome. In

his father's cotton mills he early stepped into the position of a master, full of plans for improving the condition of the working-people, building reading-rooms, baths, and decent cottages, at a time when such doings were looked upon as rather Quixotic. He afterwards became deputy-lieutenant of his own county, and M.P. for Ashton-under-Lyne. A generous helper, and by nature a leader, he became a stubborn fighter for reform in the laws he had found to be so great a hindrance to his efforts for promoting the welfare of his employees. He is specially named here, as the friendship and co-operation begun in school-life did not end there; and in 1847 he was, along with Samuel Lucas, John Mills, and others, engaged in the formation and furtherance of the Lancashire Public Schools Association.

In passing, one recalls the memory of another widely-known and well-remembered Lancashire Dominie, William Littlewood of Rochdale, who once had John Bright as a pupil; Mr. Littlewood also being one of those who, in their different "academies," then somewhat despised by both the "Classes" and the "Classicals," were making the men whom they lived to see storm the Universities, and win for their children equal educational vantage-ground in Oxford and Cambridge.

One wonders that none of our modern novelists have essayed to give us such living portraits of our north-country schoolmasters as Scott, Barrie, and

Ian Maclaren have stamped on our grateful memories, of the Scotch Dominie.

Dear old Dominies ! with their individual interest in every pupil from his youth upwards, the Latin and the love so effectually laid on at the end of the tawse, that wheresoever a Scotchman might roam he never forgot his Latin, or ceased to cherish with affection the memory of his Dominie !

Doubtless the present elaborate educational machinery is a necessity of the age, but is it all gain ? A man cannot personally love 500 or 1000 boys ; and with the best heart in the world, he must adapt himself to the new conditions. Methinks, save for the blessed differences of the powers of absorption, existing alike in plants and in humans, we might all now be machine-made, and turned out with as little difference in texture as is to be found in the products of any loom ! Thank God ! the rose yet comes up red, and the cornflower blue !

Of Mr. Mills' three brothers, two, William and Samuel, died many years ago, their "work well done." James, the youngest, has not long survived the brother to whom he was deeply attached, not only fraternally, but by ties of sympathy, of tastes in literature, and especially in music. At an early age he gave up good business prospects to devote himself professionally to music. He became for thirty years a successful teacher, and also organist at the Albion Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, than

which not many places of worship could rejoice in so beautiful and devotional a service and perfectly trained choir, every member of which his lovable yet firm nature inspired with deep personal affection.



MR. JAMES MILLS,
Professor of Music.

He was for many years musical critic to the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, and composed many beautiful and favourite hymn tunes, including the now widely popular accompaniment to "I heard the Voice of Jesus say." His last effort was the

composing (by special request) of music for the Beatitudes, and teaching it to his choir a short time before his death, which took place in July 1897, at the age of sixty-nine, nine months after the loss of his beloved friend and brother, John. The two sons of Mr. James Mills are both engaged in journalism, the elder, John Saxon, in London, the younger, William Haslam, on the *Manchester Guardian*.

Not long before his death he (James) sent me the following short sketch of his brother, from which I quote as follows :—

"I fear you will think my notes in reference to John's early life very scanty ; for though my own impression of his boyhood, with its breezy life and activity, is quite vivid, I find it more difficult than I expected to recall definite incidents. I have not ventured to write anything about John's special tastes in literature during his boyhood ; I dare say you will have heard more about that than I know. I know he had a very early admiration of Keats and Shelley, and that he went through a period of Byronic enthusiasm before his lifelong worship of Wordsworth began. Our father occupied a responsible and confidential position with Messrs. Reyners. He was universally respected for his upright character, while his interest in public affairs, and ability in discharge of public duties, secured his election on the first council after the incorporation of his native borough (Ashton). In the promotion of the progress and welfare of his fellow-citizens, in quiet efficient service as superintendent of a large Sunday School, in simple home life, and in his books, he found his life's work and happiness. Our mother combined in an unusual degree the qualities of strong, practical common-sense with the tenderest parental solicitude and pride, the two often irreconcilable qualities being fused into a character of rare excellence by a devout and sincere Christian faith.

"John was the youngest but one of the six children who lived to maturity. Family history speaks of him as having

been 'the flower of the flock,' for personal beauty and physical health. My elder brother by five years, he was early sent to Mr. Sunderland, whose school was already in high repute. Delighting in all manly games, frank, fearless in disposition, and withal full of interest in all liberal studies, he showed exactly the type of boyhood that could have won distinction in the larger sphere of public school life. As it was, his presence brought a new element into the prosaic life of a commercial school. He became, at the age of thirteen, editor and leading contributor to a school magazine, and in after days his Dominie used to speak of the 'John Mills epoch' as one unique in the history of the school for its intellectual life and spirit.

"Amongst his most faithful coadjutors in the conducting of his periodical were Hugh Mason, Walter Ashton (who afterwards attained a high position as a banker, and who married a daughter of the Rev. Dr. Halle of Manchester), and the friend of his heart, Jesse Davidson Barker. Verse-writing was the earliest form in which his literary enthusiasm showed itself—every remarkable incident, pathetic or humorous, in home or school life served as occasion. On the death of a favourite cat he shyly brought out and read to us an 'Ode' entitled 'The Cat-a-strophe,' when, whilst reading it, to the amusement of the family, pussy walked quietly into the room and formed one of the audience. He was, however, equal to the occasion, and scribbled an additional stanza, the last line of which I recollect was, 'The dead's alive, the lost is found.'

"The propensity for running into rhyme was so strong, that even a sharp scolding for soiling a newly-scoured floor with muddy boots set him off. Turning away, with a look of outraged dignity, he being then ten years old, he disappeared for the afternoon, but at tea-time he walked in, and without a word laid a folded paper on his mother's plate, and again vanished—but only behind the door, to enjoy the reading of it. This 'Ode,' as he called it, still exists in its clear, beautiful handwriting and ornamental title—

'SATURDAY.

'Saturday, Saturday, terrible day !
When cross-tempered housewives will have their own way ;
Long washings and scourings must have their own place—
But tell me, pray tell me, who dares them to face ?

Terror of terrors ! oh where must I flee !
 For they rule from the Thames to the banks of the Dee !
 Wherever I turn, and wherever I go,
 They're in every street, and in every row !
 Oh ! Sunday or Monday, I sigh for your bliss,
 And Tuesday or Wednesday gladly would kiss,
 Sing on Thursday or Friday proximity's lay,
 But again comes the day,—oh ! the terrible day !
 O Jews ! will ye suffer this sad dereliction,
 That women should rule with all power and diction ;
 That your long-hallowed Sabbath be thus desecrated—
 Usurers were past, and must ever be hated !
 Let Philosophy calm bring her arguments nigh,
 But banish all hope, for they'll soon make her fly !
 Let a Cæsar or Buonaparte thundering come,
 He'll be forced to retreat to his own native home !
 Saturday, Saturday, terrible day !
 When cross-tempered housewives will have their own way ;
 Long washings and scourings must have their own place—
 But tell me, pray tell me, who dares them to face ?'

AGE 10.

"At about the age of sixteen John was transferred direct from school to the Ashton branch of the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank, but his education was far from being finished then. The 'little Latin and less Greek' he may have acquired at school was supplemented by diligent reading throughout the period of his boyhood—so diligent as can be guessed only by those who had the privilege of his acquaintance, and in later life of intercourse with a singularly acute and cultured mind. But diligent as he was, he was never merely a solitary student. He associated himself with a number of youths, imparting his own earnest spirit, and thus became again the central figure of an intellectual circle. Nor did the interest and exercises of his strenuous boyhood stop here. An enthusiastic student of music,¹ both on its theoretical and practical side, he found time to cultivate it with a zeal and thoroughness not often shown by amateurs, taking great delight in contrapuntal exercises, of which many ingenious examples

¹ Appendix, p. 390.

remain. Later in life he developed a special gift in vocal music, using his fine baritone voice with great effect, both in the social circle and in concerts given for the aid of all good objects."

A letter to his friend Jesse Davidson Barker, an old Sunderlandite, and member of their "Mutual," who had gone to live in Scotland, is a specimen of the rhymed epistles in which he occasionally indulged—

" O Jesse, sure, ye careless wight,
 Ye'd lost your pen, or lost your sight,
 I thocht ye ne'er wer' gaun to write
 Ane scratchin' mair,
 An' I wer' gar't amaist cleant gyte
 Wi' sorrow sair.

Neglectit sae by ane endeared,
 I greetit, rantit, raved, an' fleered ;
 At length yer twa gude sheets appeared,
 And when they cam'
 I danced to fin' that a' I feared
 Wer' airy flam.

But, Jess, ye dwell in sic a city,
 'Mang gentles grit and leddies pretty,
 My blunt address 'll sure no fit ye ;
 An' should a frien'
 In Argyle Street but chaunce to meet ye,
 Ye wadna ken !

Na, na, dear Jess, yer na sae fickle,
 Ye'd spak your friens baith wee an' mickle,
 In braid sunshine, or sorrow's pickle,
 An' ever will
 Till Death shall crap us wi' his sickle,
 An' langer still.

'The 'Mutuals' had a gran' tea-party,
 An' a' wer' cheery, prime, an' hearty :
 I saw nae ane face sour an' tarty ;
 An' then the tea !
 O' sic braw stuff, wi' nought to part ye
 Ye'd drink a sea !

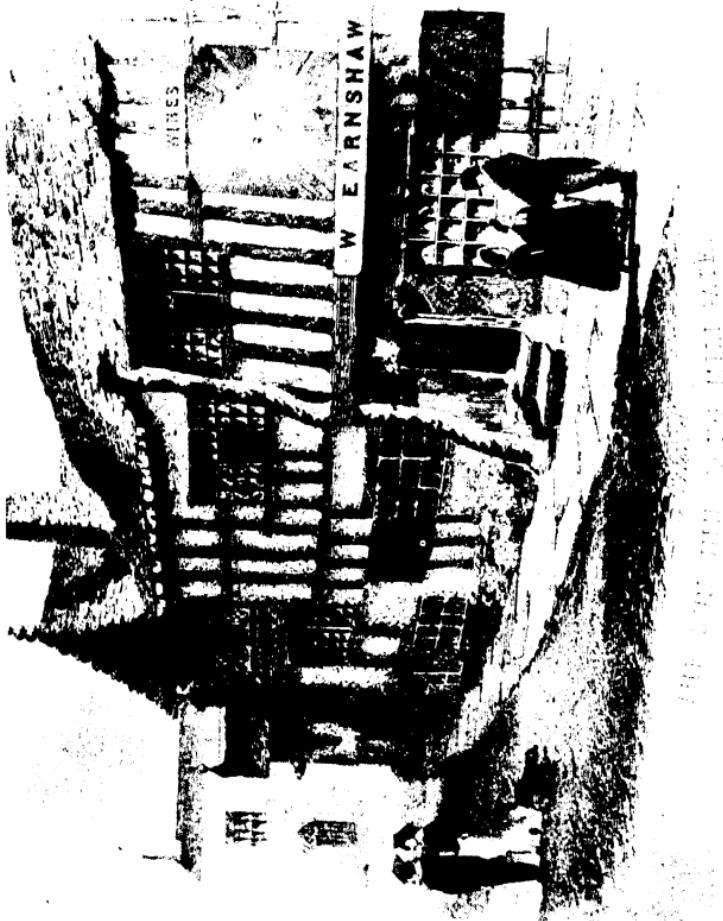
An' there wer' buns, an' grapes, an' speeches,
 An' sonsie lassies, fair as peaches,
 An' ane o' our gude Ashton leeches
 Ca'd Charlie Clay—
 Ye ken him weel, I'd lay my breeches,
 An' weel ye may.

But a' that passed I canna tell,
 Sic unco funny things befell ;
 I wish ye had been there yersel'
 Amang the rantin',
 Ye wad hae seen wha took the bell,
 An' wha wer' wantin'.

I ken nae that there's ony news--
 We've done wi' a' thae Chartist foo's,
 An' Socialists an' our mock Jews ¹
 Hae had their fling.
 But I maun cease ; my wearie muse
 Has drooped her wing.

My verses are no worth a fig
 I ken fu' weel ; an', Jess, I beg
 Ye'll just put on a learned wig,
 Look great an' grave,
 Then tak' yer' critic jockteleg,
 An' cut an' shave.

I've rhymed mysel' into a fog ;
 But though I'm neither Burns nor Hogg
 While yet life's wheel hath e'er a cog
 It's office fills,
 There'll be a faithfu' rhymin' dog
 In ane Jock Mills."



OLD SUN INN, OR POET'S CORNER.

(To face p. 97.

Some of Mr. Mills' old manuscript books contain many early efforts in prose and poetry ; crude perhaps, and youthful, but interesting, as showing the bent of mind and extensive reading. From 1833 to 1840, every emotion seemed of necessity to find its expression in verse, mostly of a quality that the author would shrink from perpetrating in print—“The Power of God,” “British India,” “Life and Death,” published in the *Youth's Magazine* for 1840; “Pythias to Damon,” “Lines after reading ‘Childe Harold,’ ” and “Don Juan,” “Autumn,” “Winter.” We will quote only one sample—“Who are the Living of the Earth?”—one of a collection of original contributions read at a literary meeting in Manchester in 1842, and published in Rogerson's “Festive Wreath,” the preface of this book containing an interesting account of this society and its meetings, with a charming engraving of the “Old Sun Inn,”—the “Poet's Corner” as it was then playfully called. It was close to the Collegiate School, and opposite the birthplace of Harrison Ainsworth. Present at the annual meeting referred to were Critchley Prince, J. B. Rogerson, Geo. Faulkner, the editor of *Bradshaw's Journal*, Elijah Riding, Edwin Waugh, Scholes, S. Bamford, &c. John Mills' reading of his contribution is fully described in a memorial notice in the *Manchester Guardian* of October 1897, by an

extract from Proctor's "Bygone Manchester." He
was then in his twenty-first year.

"WHO ARE THE LIVING OF THE EARTH?

Who are the living of the earth ?
Not they who creep, like slugs, from birth
Through noteless years to nameless graves.
The spark celestial early craves
Celestial aliment, and wings,
To roam amid all glorious things :
And the pinions germ, and the heights are won,
And richly then lives Fancy's son !
Music winding the world about
Tempt spirit-cloistered echoes out ;
Within him, Beauty's moulds and dies
Mingle their eternities.
Mark him on yon promontory
Fledging his vision for flight of glory ;
For, oh ! what a beautiful world is ours !
Bright waters, green meadows, and twilight bowers !
And seen by the youth from his mountain peak,
They sleep on the plain so bland and meek ;
The blue sky kissing the ocean white,
Dim on the outer verge of sight ;
The City's pride of spires and domes,
The hamlet-cluster of peasant homes ;
The river, curved like an argent snake,
Through flowery sward, and woodland brake.
For years 'twill be life's-dew to find
That scene's fair reflex in his mind !

Mark the same mute, earnest form
When the spirit of the speeding storm
Sends mystic bodings through the trees,
Which move and moan without a breeze ;
When the clouds brood low o'er the stifled earth,
And scowl in the throes of the thunder-birth.

Mark that flushed brow and throbbing eye,
 For, solved by intensest sympathy,
 His spirit is blent with the tempest strife—
 Oh, this is living—this is life !
 Who are the living of the earth ?
 The bubbles of passion and joyless mirth
 Are freighted with many a slave of lust,
 Whose name shall moulder with his dust ;
 But what of worthy life has this—
 To note the orb of early bliss
 Wane from its goodly matin-prime
 Chill and dim with lapsing time,
 Even memory trembling with the breath
 Above the oblivious maw of death ?
 A nobler tale hath every age
 Of bard, and orator, and sage
 Immortal. Oh ! thou old Greek glory,
 The sire sublime of song and story !
 And thou, our own, whose poet-spell
 Pierced highest Heaven and deepest Hell !
 Twins in darkness and in light,
 Twins in weakness and in might !
 What power thus wraps the mighty heart
 In steel'd defiance to the dart
 Which quells all meaner lives and fames ?
Ye would not die ! Ye greened your names
 With amaranth for ever vernal
 Blooming by the stream Eternal,
 Whose waters zone the earth, that we
 May lave our lorn humanity,
 While from their fringed verge we cull
 Wreaths of the deathless beautiful !

Are the flowers fair in their dewy dreaming ?
 Are the streams pure on their moss-beds gleaming ?
 Are bird-voices sweet in pleasant green places ?
 Is their soul in the smiles of our human graces ?
 Why bare the great Mother this lavish birth ?—
 'Twas for you—ye living of the Earth !

The years between 1836 and 1844 were years of self-culture, along with diligent mastering of the technicalities and duties of his profession; with the latter no pursuit, however entrancing, was ever permitted to interfere. This principle, regarded by him simply as honesty, was carried through life from the days of clerkship to those of managership and directorate.

Those were days when books were scarce and dear, yet, doubtless, all the more valued by the book-loving members of the "Mutuals," who, saving their pence by self-denial, joined in the purchase of perhaps a Wordsworth, a Bentham, or an Emerson, which, when procured, was devoured, discussed, and essayed upon till it was made their own, and never forgotten. The book done with, happy was the young member who, by dint of careful saving, had become rich enough to buy it at half-price, and, with a proud sense of ownership, put it on his book-shelf. Such purchases often formed the nucleus of many a later large library, the finest volumes of which were not more valued than those homely, well-thumbed, and hardly-earned treasures. There still exists the MS. of a "Mutual" lecture by John Mills, when nineteen, on Jeremy Bentham.

The "Common-Place Book" was another outcome of these conditions—not the dainty book of the present day (if indeed it exists to any great extent), with its cullings of quaint sayings, and short,

striking paragraphs, &c.—but a goodly two-inch thick folio. Lying before the writer are specimens of some penned by John Mills, in his own clear, beautiful “hand of write,” from very early years; from Coleridge pages and pages; the whole of his letter to J. C. on the Trinity and Unitarianism; Morel, Arnold, Jean Paul, Goethe, Dr. S. Brown, Sydney Smith, Locke, Bacon, Von Humboldt, Martineau, Ruskin, Strauss, Adam Fitz-Adam, Mill, Foster, Leigh Hunt, Kant, Smith’s “Wealth of Nations,” Burke, &c. Let the student of to-day reflect what it meant to have to write great portions of such books in order to make them one’s own! When Alexander Ireland conceived the idea of publishing his delightful “Enchiridion,” now become a classic, he had endless material at hand in careful cullings from great writers, extending over a period of some sixty years, though for the more modern extracts he might have had to make patient research.

In an address (the last he ever gave in public) at the opening of the Longsight Free Library, in 1892, Mr. Ireland said, “Perhaps it is not altogether inappropriate that I should be asked to give this address, as I am the last survivor of the original committee which, in 1851, organised the Manchester Free Library, the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. It is strange that I should to-day take part in the christening of the two hundred and fiftieth bantling of that prolific mother—there

being now 250 free libraries, containing probably 3½ millions of volumes. Here let me take note of the wonderfully cheap production in these days of good books. . . . I look at these volumes, and cast a backward glance to the days when I was a lad, and recall the difficulty of procuring books to read at that time. I remember well my passionate admiration of one book, an expensive one, in two volumes, which was far beyond my means of buying, so there was nothing for it but to spend months in transcribing it from beginning to end. When I contrast the past with the present time, I can scarcely realise the change which has taken place ! Be thankful, my young friends, that you are living in 1892 !"

Before his death, Mr. Ireland's choice and valuable library consisted of from 15,000 to 20,000 volumes, some portions of which were purchased by Mr. T. R. Wilkinson, and presented by him to the Manchester Reference Library.

By the wise, timely, and generous act of Mrs. John Rylands, Manchester this year becomes the proud possessor of the famous "Althorp Library," and the opening of the stately home she has built for its reception will indeed be a day of grateful rejoicing ; the consecration of the precious corner-stone of a "building fitly framed together," a temple meant for high and noble use, freely open to students of every clime.

In 1844 Mr. Mills was transferred to the

Rochdale branch of his bank. Rochdale at that time was, or thought it was (perhaps not quite without reason), a good deal in adyance of its neighbouring towns in regard to political, social, and ecclesiastical reforms. Church rates were no longer enforced there; the Corn-Law question was rapidly ripening for the final struggle. Being the home of John Bright, it became the centre of the various phases of the fight for cheap bread and free trade. Richard Cobden became a familiar figure, and verily, the victory gained, Rochdale went wild with joy, and posed for a while, in its own idea at least, as "the hub of the Universe," transposing a well-known saying into, "What Rochdale says to-day, England will say to-morrow."

But, to speak seriously, it is no small privilege to have been born in Rochdale. Grit, shrewdness, love of fair-play, a faculty for organisation, combined with a dogged persistence in action towards a desired end, and a keen eye for shams, were characteristics well fitting its inhabitants for becoming leaders and pioneers in many notable movements of which we may truly say, "Rochdale began it." In 1844 a few working-men commenced the Equitable Pioneer Society, on co-operative principles; to-day that parent society numbers 13,000 members, and possesses over three millions' worth of property, and co-operation spreads its ramifications all over the land—but "Rochdale began it!"

Church rates were abolished after thirty years of struggle—but, in 1840, “Rochdale began it.” The Corn Laws were repealed and the people’s bread untaxed, and if Rochdale did not exactly begin that, she was in at the start and in at the death, never slackening bridle all through the race. The shackles of a great ecclesiastical autocracy, a priestly despotism which was crushing the life out of Methodism, received a great check, a health-giving depletion, in the Secession of 1836, which resulted finally in the establishment of the Free Methodist Church, and the very gradual saving growth of democratic principles in the parent Church itself. But—“Rochdale began it !”

Into the midst of all this active, seething life John Mills came, entering eagerly into the spirit of it all. He, however, never took a prominent personal position in local politics, yet at many important crises he did not hesitate, both then and in later life, to employ his powerful pen in leading article or stirring lyric to help the cause of progress and of freedom.

The great masses of the people lay at this time in despairing darkness and misery, crushed between the nether millstones of physical and spiritual hunger. The hardly-earned flour, often so bad, so rotten that, when put into the oven to bake—the famished children standing round impatient for the promised bread—it soon came, thick and warm,

trickling out on to the hearth, but even then was grabbed by the little hands and eaten in a trice, the father and mother standing by, hungry, helpless, and heart-broken !

Some of the older folk had seen their little girls, of eight and ten years of age, sent down into the darkness of the coal-pits to work with a chain round the waist for ten or twelve hours ; others to the cotton mills, to stew and slave, even when babes of seven, the livelong day. People read of these things now with wonderment as of a tale that is told ; but we saw, and knew, and writhed under the knowledge. Well might the cry of the worn and weary souls be, "Is there a God ? Where shall we look for help ?" The card-playing, fox-hunting parson was held in derision ; the scholarly, pious recluse, living and working for the future, was to them an unknown quantity, and the grey, rigid Calvinism of the Independents and Baptists, a repellent mystery, how well illustrated in Alton Locke and his mother, we all know. The remaining fervours of the Wesley revival, the devotion of the Methodist communities, seemed to be the leaven then appealing most successfully to the hearts of the lowest and most hopeless among the people. The Gospel of a Free Salvation, of an Infinite Love and Pity for all—the Christ as lifted up, all tenderness and sympathy—drew many after Him ; but even this precious saving influence was unfortunately much hindered by encrustation

with a Puritan severity and gravity that ill accorded with the naturally jocund nature of the Lancashire folk, who "mun ha' their marlocks," and who resented threats of eternal burnings for singing a good song, rejoicing in a clog-dance, and in the fun of a Rush-bearing. And so they lived on in sullen helplessness; yet happily, under all there existed a divine discontent, a restless yearning for better conditions, which culminated in the rise of Chartism, with all its accompanying agitations and riotings.

With the aspirations of the Chartist Mr. Mills sympathised, their methods he condemned, his attitude towards them being exactly that of Charles Kingsley. There is a tradition in Ashton of a crowded education meeting which he and Hugh Mason had convened in the Town Hall in 1848, when an attempt was made by the Chartist, under the leadership of Joseph Rayner Stephens, to break it up. John Mills rose, and in a vigorous and impassioned speech carried the meeting with him, to the chagrin and discomfiture of Mr. Stephens, who saw that his amendment would be defeated. One of the few survivors who was present says, "One incident I very distinctly recollect. Stephens was in one of his (public) splenetic moods. Mr. Mills concluded with 'I am no orator as Brutus is,' whereupon Stephens, with a bitter, contemptuous manner, pointing to the 'stripling, vociferated, 'Orator! That thing!' Once more confusion reigned, and

the chairman declared the meeting closed. The stripling and his friends slipped quietly out at the back, leaving the mob carrying on the argument by dint of fists, sticks, and shoutings, until dispersed by the constables."

On the darkness of that time day at last seemed to be dawning. John Bright was making his power felt ; Richard Cobden giving his means and his life for the people ; Lord Ashley was devoting his heart and soul to the cause of the factory workers, especially the little children—all throwing rays of hope above the black horizon.

Here stands out in clearest memory one name, as presenting to the people, not a new Gospel, but the old undying truths in fresh and forcible guise. Only those who lived then know with what eagerness Thomas Carlyle was read by hungering, thirsting souls, sick to death of the oppressions and falsities by which they were surrounded. It is said that a fine issue of "Sartor Resartus" is just coming out ; that is good, but never again can it impart the electric thrill of a new revelation, such as in those days resulted from the first reading of "Sartor," "Past and Present," and the "Latter-Day Pamphlets!"

The Divine Tiller had, as ever, prepared the soil ; and the students of those earlier "Mutuals" and Mechanics' Institutions—men of the people and with the people—were ready and receptive. By this time

also, numbers of the artisan class had with difficulty learnt to read—some even to write—the work of the Sunday Schools greatly helping. In the morning, before service, reading and writing were taught, the latter being by some saintly souls considered as a serious breach of the Sabbath! Grown men valued the privilege, and would come to us begging to sit side by side with their children. It was, as they said, “terrible hard work”; and often at home they learnt from their little ones, whose young brains and ductile fingers more readily picked up knowledge.

Into this soil the utterances of Thomas Carlyle—that sledge-hammer shatterer of shams—came, as touched with live coal from the Altar, stirring into fresh life and new shape the discontent simmering in the hearts of the people. Not all at once was this effected; the more cultivated young minds of that generation first received the gospel of the “Everlasting Yea,” and longed to impart it to others. John Mills and some of his friends, in 1845, gave much time to this work, prior to the appearance of George Dawson. Carlyle readings and Carlyle lectures were given, not in grand Toynbee Halls, or dilettante fashionable drawing-rooms, but in small Mechanics’ Institutes, country Sunday School rooms, and cottages, in the dinner hour as well as the evenings. The men clubbed to buy and lend copies of the books, and soon all the then published works of Carlyle were being diligently conned in the

homes of the artisan and the shopkeeper, in the blacksmith's shop, on the tailor's bench, and in the "wan weaver's" attic. His bold stripping of the shams from the higher and governing classes gained their confidence, and pleased them mightily; but when their own cants and weaknesses were in their turn mercilessly exposed, they grew grave and sometimes restive. Soon, however, they learned to grasp and apply such wholesome truths as, "Wilt thou know a man by stringing together beads and roots of what thou namest facts?" "The Man is the Spirit he works in—not what he did, but what he became." "Liberty! The liberty of not being oppressed by your fellow-men is but a fractional part of human liberty. True, from all men mayest thou be emancipated; but from Thyself and the Devil? No man oppresses thee, O free and independent Franchiser, but does not this stupid Porter-pot oppress thee? Thou art the thrall, not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites, and this scoured dish of liquor; and thou pratest of thy 'liberty'—thou entire blockhead!"

To what extent, one wonders, did the great iconoclasts and reformers of the next decades realise how much they owed to the teachings of Thomas Carlyle—the preparing Voice "crying in the wilderness"?

When, in 1846 and 1847, George Dawson came to Manchester to lecture on Carlyle and Emerson,

every night crowded audiences gathered to listen and learn. As usual Mr. Mills, anxious that no one likely to be interested should miss hearing Dawson, sent special reminders to a few friends. From one of these, Jacob Bright, he received the following reply :—

JACOB BRIGHT to J. MILLS.

"ROCHDALE, Jan. 17, 1846.

"DEAR MILLS,—Thanks for your note, for had it not been unnecessary it would have been invaluable. Unknown to each we both enjoyed Thursday's lecture, and I, the Tuesday's before; and I assure you I have been far too much pleased, far too deeply instructed by these, not to hear the remainder. You are right in saying that clearness has been a desideratum in the Carlyle philosophy, &c., for this reason, after reading him and others, we relish much Dawson. Hoping to meet you next Tuesday at the Athenæum.—Yours sincerely,

"J. BRIGHT, Junr."

He also sent to Critchley Prince, who attended the lectures; but when a few months later Mr. Mills sent him Emerson's poems to read, he returned them with the following note :—

J. C. PRINCE to J. MILLS.

"December 31, 1846.

"DEAR MILLS,—I thank you for the loan of Emerson's poems, from which, however, I have derived little pleasure and profit. He is too studiously rugged and obscure for my taste, though I doubt not he will have his admirers.

"I send a copy of the 'Winter Sketch,' together with three

other sonnets which you have not perhaps seen before. If you have any other book which you think I have not seen, I shall feel obliged by the loan of it when convenient.—Faithfully yours,

JOHN C. PRINCE."

In Alexander Ireland's "Recollections of George Dawson," he says, "The delivery of this course was a noteworthy event: not only did it stimulate earnest thought amongst us, but it also revealed to many searching spirits a series of writings abounding in riches, hitherto known only to a small number of students; an impulse was given to freedom of thought, and many young men and women were stimulated to higher aims and encouraged to aspire to a nobler daily life."

We may be sure that to John Mills and his helpers, who in their humble fashion had been trying to introduce Carlyle to their working friends, these lectures were a godsend. George Dawson and John Mills met, and were soon *en rapport*, and friends to the last, Mr. Dawson, after Mr. Mills' marriage, being his guest on several occasions.

Nor were the song-writers for this epoch lacking. Hood's "Song of the Shirt" flashed through the country, whilst Charles Mackay's "Cheer, Boys, Cheer! there's a Good Time Coming," voiced the rising hope of the people; and, above all, the Corn-Law Rhymer, Ebenezer Elliott, whom Carlyle thought worthy of a whole chapter in his "Past

and Present." The high esteem in which Mr. Mills held Elliott, was shown by our finding amongst his papers, carefully preserved in a time-stained envelope, a round perforated card, to which a bit of glass was attached with silk cross-stitch, covering a lock of hair; on the back was written, "Ebenezer Elliott." There was a similar card bearing at the back the name of Jeremy Bentham.

This time of unrest, struggle, and rapid changes might perhaps hinder somewhat, but did not stop the steady pursuit of further culture on the part of John Mills. Though but little poetry was then written, much was read.

CHAPTER II

1845.—From boyhood John Mills usually spent his holidays in long tramps over hill and dale; in early days mostly over Saddleworth, Greenfield, and Derbyshire; then in Wales, Scotland, and the English Lake District. In July 1845, in his twenty-fourth year, he first met Wordsworth, and describes the interview in his journal as follows:—

“On arriving at Ambleside, about eleven o’clock, I strolled in the direction of Rydal, the Mecca of my pilgrimage. Rydal Mount is charmingly situated on the right slope of the Vale of Grasmere, looking down on the lovely little Rydal lake, and commanding a distant view of Windermere—a mirror of gleaming glass in a dark, irregular framework of hills. Not being furnished with a letter of introduction to the Poet, I rambled along with no very definite purpose except to see his residence, and with a faint hope of catching a distant glimpse of his person. Coming nearer, I felt a more ambitious impulse, and addressing myself to a groom who was cleaning harness close by, was told that by going into a field below, I should have a good sight of the Poet, without being myself ob-

served. Away I hurried, and found the promise true. On a green elevated sward, which made a kind of circular platform round a clump of trees, slowly pacing along in lively conversation with a younger man, was the Poet. He was dressed in light summer clothes, and a rather broad-brimmed straw hat shaded his massive brow and most intellectual features. His cheerful, musical voice, very slightly tremulous with old age, strangely enough sounded to my ear like an echo of something in the past. Certain it is that, having read Wordsworth's poetry, the tone and aspect of the man struck me with no sense of novelty, but seemed more like a reminiscence than a first sight of him. I grew excited with the tones of his voice, and envied his companion; and I felt like a poacher, but could not forego the luxury. A bold thought struck me, and taking a card from my pocket, I scribbled in pencil as follows: 'A young and ardent admirer of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry would be most happy to be allowed to make personally his acknowledgments for mental health and enjoyment derived from the perusal of the "Excursion," and hopes that such a request will not be deemed intrusive.'

"Away I went back to the groom (or gardener), who bore my missive to his master. He returned with the message that 'Mr. Wordsworth **was at** that moment engaged, but he would be happy to

speak a few words with me on the departure of a gentleman with whom he was conversing. In the meantime I could enter the garden, which commanded the scenery of the vale.' I went forward and, instinctively uncovering, approached the old man. He stepped forward, shook hands, and then pointed to a summer-house through which I should find my way to the best point for viewing Rydal Mere. 'By the time you return,' he said, 'I shall probably be at liberty.' I went, and found a delicious scene, the beauty of which, and the novel interest of my position, wrapped me away into a kind of reverie. One thought was beginning to shape itself into verse something like this—

'I marvel not, ye music-stricken trees,
And winds and waters, that ye ne'er are mute'¹—

when the gentleman with whom Wordsworth had been conversing came up to look at Rydal, and to say that I might now have the promised interview. With this gentleman I was soon on friendly terms, and on the way down he presented me with his card, jocularly remarking that I should recognise his name as an old offender. I found I was in the company of Charles Mackay, author of '*The Salamandrine*', '*The Hope of the World*', '*Popular Delusions*', &c., editor of the principal newspaper in Glasgow, and a reviewer for the

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 6.

quarterlies. Before I could speak with Wordsworth an old lady, sitting in a little hand-carriage on the grass plot, beckoned to me mysteriously, and on moving towards her I saw that it was the sister of the poet, the 'dear, dear friend' apostrophised in the lines on 'Tintern Abbey,' and the lady of whom De Quincey speaks so glowingly. From her evident insanity I would gladly have avoided her, but could not without marked courtesy. As I leaned upon the side of her carriage, she told me her age (which I now forget), and then, as if struck by an interesting idea, she exclaimed, 'Now listen, I will recite you some verses that I made in the long ago,' and forthwith she mumbled through a series of stanzas of a religious-philosophical kind. After some unconnected conversation with her I was called by Wordsworth, and entered his study with something of the awe with which I should have trod the inner temple. After some talk on minor points I told him that, young as I was, there were some features of similarity between his ideal solitary and myself, and that his 'Pastor' and 'Wanderer' had done much to induce a healthier and more energetic tone of mind. He expressed much pleasure at this, and said that similar acknowledgments had frequently been made to him. I asked for his autograph, and he wrote me two, saying that he should not consider it trouble at all but for his blunt pens. On my observing that his celebrity

must subject him to many troublesome invasions, he said that two manufacturing vandals from Dukinfield came the other day, and tramped through his grounds without asking leave, and that he had growled at them awfully. Mackay then said Rogers had told him that it was quite customary for passing passengers to fling wreaths of flowers upon Wordsworth over the hedge, and that once they were flung in such numbers that the poor Laureate was literally buried beneath them—was it true? he inquired. ‘Not quite buried,’ said Wordsworth, ‘that was one of Sam’s pleasant little hyperboles’; but he certainly was occasionally saluted with a posy. Although his memory was in some respects treacherous, he seemed to remember the little vindication I had written in the *Manchester Times* of his sentiments on Burns’ ‘Scots wha hae,’ and which I had sent him at the time. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘I may have said to Mrs. Hemans savage things of this song, but I never did Burns an injustice. Only listen to such stuff as this—’ and then he launched into a severe analysis of the song, translating it into simple English, and exposing its baldness and absurdity, with the exception of one line—‘Who would fill a coward’s grave?’ which he asserted was the only good line in the song. Shortly afterwards I took my leave, in company with Mr. Mackay, with whom I have since made the tour of the Lake District.”

This chance meeting with Charles Mackay led to a closer acquaintance and much correspondence, from which a few extracts are here given. Mr. Mackay's own account of it is given in his little book, "The English Lakes," published in 1852. He says, "Before leaving Wordsworth's garden I made the acquaintance of Mr. John Mills, of Ashton-under-Lyne, a young enthusiast in literature. He was my companion for three days amid the lakes, congeniality of taste having made us intimate in less than a quarter of an hour. We devoted the remainder of the day to an exploration of the scenery of Lake Windermere. Next morning we visited Coniston Water; on arriving, we took a boat whilst breakfast was preparing, and my companion being strong and sturdy at the oar, rowed for a full mile down the lake and back.

"On our return from Coniston, finding that Mr. Mills had not seen Stock-Gill Force, I paid a second visit that I might act as guide to its beauties; we parted company at Keswick."

C. MACKAY to J. MILLS.

" GLASGOW, September 2, 1845.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—In the first place, before entering upon the minor portions of your letter, let me thank you for the very kind and eloquent criticism upon my book, which you have written for the *Manchester Times*. No other review of it that I have seen has given me half the pleasure of yours, and

though they have all been laudatory enough to flatter one's vanity, their praise has not been bestowed in such a way as to satisfy the reason. You, alone, have taken the pains to think upon the general scope and tendency of what I have written, and to make acquaintance with the inner spirit as well as the outward form. Should you feel inclined hereafter to try your hand (no longer a 'prentice one) upon a critique of any book that pleases you, or displeases you, very much, the columns of the *Argus* will be open to you, and the editor thereof will be very happy to receive what you may write. The Rydal Sonnet I like exceedingly, and enclose you herewith a proof of it in print for your revision. If you do not wish it published let me know; but I fully expect you will not be able to resist my importunity to let it appear in an early number of the *Glasgow Argus*.

"Tell me whether your sonnet is to be printed.

"CHARLES MACKAY."

C. MACKAY to J. MILLS.

"GLASGOW, October 10, 1845.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—Of course you received the *Argus* which I sent you, containing your verses?

"You mentioned in your letter that you would be very happy to be of service to me if you could in the literary way. I can show you how you could serve me, and try, not your 'prentice, but your master hand. I am engaged in writing an account of my tour to the Lakes, which I have been requested to do by the Messrs. Gilks, who this year brought out an illustrated volume by Miss Costello on the scenery of North Wales. They want mine as a sort of companion to that, and I have engaged to produce it for them. It struck me to-day, on commencing operations, that there would be a very great deficiency in it if I did not return once more to the Lakes and visit the district between Coniston and Ulverstone, and Furness Abbey. I cannot spare the time, even were the weather more favourable. On turning to your letter, I found that you had visited this particular district after we separated, and if your remembrance

of what you saw is still vivid, and you would have no objection to send me a sketch of your adventures, and a descriptive account of the scenery, antiquities, and all the objects of interest you saw, I would introduce it in my own narrative with all the honours. What say you to this? That you could do it well I have not the smallest doubt, and I would take care to usher in your part with a blast of trumpets. Let me know your high decision, after you have duly weighed the ponderous matter.—Ever yours truly, CHAS. MACKAY."

C. MACKAY to J. MILLS.

" GLASGOW, October 18, 1845.

" MY DEAR MILLS,—Many thanks for your kind consent. A description of your route from Keswick to Furness is all I want, and your own impressions of what you saw. The book is to be entitled 'The Poetry and Scenery of the English Lakes,' and will be of the same size as Miss Costello's 'Mountains of North Wales.' The antiquarian part of the matter is easily enough to be procured, but the genial gossip of a lover of poetry and natural beauty is more difficult to get, and the very part that you can supply. I suppose your lectures¹ are all prepared by this time, and I have no doubt they will be popular in your neighbourhood. I wish them all success.—Yours very truly, CHAS. MACKAY."

C. MACKAY to J. MILLS.

" GLASGOW, February 21, 1846.

" MY DEAR MILLS.—You will doubtless think me not only bad as a correspondent, but ingrate as a man, for having neglected for upwards of three months to acknowledge the receipt of your last, and to tell you that your reminiscences of Ulverstone and Furness, which you kindly forwarded to me,

¹ A series on the "Poets and Poetry of Lancashire," delivered in the Town Hall, Rochdale, in 1847.

are very good as far as they go. I had put the book aside for a little, being somewhat sick of it, when a sudden demand from London for MS. brought it but too visibly to my recollection, and made me renew a vow I have already taken, never to put pen to paper again for a bookseller's job, or anything that savours of compulsive restraint upon the exercise of my own free-will and fancy. The demand for the MS. brought your letter and my own neglect to my recollection also, and the present epistle is the consequence. Do not imitate my bad example, but write me a few lines at your leisure.—Yours very truly,

CHAS. MACKAY."

C. MACKAY to J. MILLS.

"FREE TRADE CLUB, April 17, 1848.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—I am much obliged for your letter and your kind notice in the *Examiner*.

"I believe you know of old that I am no great correspondent in the gossiping line, and that I make it a rule to write as few letters as I can. Nevertheless, I am always most happy to hear from and reply to my friends, and can assure you very sincerely that I always look with pleasure on the remembrance of our acquaintanceship, and the manner in which it commenced, and receive your letters with the sole regret that they are not more frequent.

"Your critique is very well written, but what would you have me do? Would you have a man write an epic in an age which is unepical, and so devote his labours to the cheese-monger? Or would you prefer a man to do as I do, namely, to write these short pieces which the people most read? Besides, I do not ignore religion and philosophy, as you hint, for if you were to read the whole of the 'Town Lyrics,' and the 'Voices from the Mountains,' you would discover both religion and philosophy—catholic and non-sectarian—and be convinced of an inner spirit, as well as an outward form, in all that I have written during the last three years.—Ever most truly yours,

CHAS. MACKAY."

J. MILLS to C. MACKAY.

"ASHTON, April 27, 1848.

"MY DEAR MACKAY,—I thank you for your prompt and friendly letter, and shall be glad to place our future correspondence on the footing you desire—that is, to write when there is anything to write about.

"I have, unfortunately, not made you understand my views about your poetical vocation. I did not intend to say that you should forbear to write political lyrics, that you might write an epic. I would not have you write an epic at all if you feel no very urgent internal prompting thereto; but do not put it on the ground of present demand, or no demand, as if poetry must necessarily follow the same economical law as regulates the supply of guano or the manufacture of hob-nails. And if you did write an epic out of the fulness of your spirit, what if 'an unepical age' used a few sheets of your 'mighty' work as envelopes for a still more *mitey* substance? This dishonour would be in no way yours, but every way that of the 'unepical age.' It was John Milton's comforting pre-science that he had written something which 'posterity would not willingly let die.' But I would not have you oblivious of the claims of your own age. Write still your social and political poems, and be our English Beranger—'Do this, but leave not the other undone!' These remarks are founded on the assumption that you have impulses to the production of works of art, as such, which have been postponed for topics of more immediate interest, and this assumption is, in its turn, founded on a remembrance of certain poems of the past, some of which are contained in the volume which you were good enough to give me at the foot of Rydal Hill. If such be not the case, of course I am quite wrong, for poetry must be spontaneous, whatever else it be.

"As for your ignoring religion and philosophy, I never thought you did so in any sense but the one I endeavoured to explain, namely, that you had for them 'no special utterance' in the sense in which Schiller and Wordsworth had. There is assuredly religion in your poetry, and a 'catholic religion,' too, or it would decompose and die more rapidly than the

cheese which you dread it should enclose; but as certainly the conserving, sacred salt is not present in sufficient quantity to give your Helicon a brackish taste or a greenish hue.

“When I come to London I will certainly find you up at your Club, or elsewhere.—Very truly yours, JOHN MILLS.

“Do you think the latest Continental movements bring nearer your ideal Union of States?”

One marked characteristic was, that attention having been once drawn to any problem—social, educational, or financial—there was no rest for Mr. Mills until the subject had been thoroughly read up, sifted, and considered; or until, so far as his then available light and judgment went, he could form root-conclusions which, in later life, were rarely if ever changed.

It was not possible that with a mind of this calibre he could escape a period of painful doubt and transition on spiritual questions. Certain it is that the ponderous theological tomes then being devoured by his eldest brother, William, who was preparing for entrance into ministerial life, had no attraction for him; he dropped his own plummet, and found anchorage in other, and perhaps deeper, waters. Reverencing his reticence on that score, his shrinking from verbal demonstration as to personal emotions—emotions ever finding their best expression in music and in song—one extract from a diary, written in 1846, shall suffice:—

August 1846.—“At Manchester this evening met with William Staley in a coffee-house, and had an hour’s deeply

interesting conversation on the metaphysics of theology. He is a thoroughly honest doubter, loving truth for its own sake, and yearning for an intelligent faith on which he may—not repose—but labour patiently through his probationary life. Of ardent temperament, yet abstemious habits, he keeps living and longing and labouring, enjoying the perpetual feast of beauty which Art and Literature furnish, yet ever haunted by the stern enigmas of Life and Eternity demanding solution. With a mind so conscientious as his, there can be only one result from all this—he will see the Light at last. He is not the only instance of a susceptible mind bewildered and made morbid between the rhapsodies of Idealism and the cold negations of Rationalism. These generally make a long pause at Unitarianism, but it grows too dry and hard for them at last, and, like Coleridge, they emerge into full faith. My friend, young S., is a case of this kind. I have been another, though now I trust I am pretty well clear of it."

At this date he was twenty-five, his friend twenty-two years of age.

CHAPTER III

MR. MILLS would often quote a saying of John Foster's, viz., that "love burns best in oxygen, that oxygen being some object which unites mutual sympathies; the stream of sympathy not flowing directly from heart to heart, but through a third class of objects in which both parties have a common interest." And certainly there was no lack of such vivifying element—social, literary, and political—in our lives, from our first acquaintance in 1845 to our marriage in 1848.

It was an intense period, marked by a quick succession of events, and pregnant with serious and far-reaching issues, involving constant effort, and often almost breathless interest and anxiety. The Anti-Corn-Law struggle, now nearing its final and victorious goal; the Chartist risings; strikes, with all their brutalities and terrors; the renewed interest in the slavery question—all these kept the mind of the community at full stretch. Then suddenly, amidst all this, the Banshee wail of the fever-stricken victims of the Irish famine, smote upon our ears, and for some time work to help Ireland was the one thing to be done. It was all-absorbing while it lasted. Cholera broke

out, and the two brave girls already mentioned—Laura and Sophia Stephens—went off to Kilkenny to the help of their sister, Mrs. Blackett (whose husband was Lord Bessborough's agent), arriving with money and clothing, but especially with large bottles of tincture of camphor, which, dropped upon sugar, was then considered *the specific for cholera attacks*. We also begged from friends quantities of tiny empty bottles, ready for them to fill and distribute to the people. Would we had kept their letters describing the terrible scenes, and how the poor creatures besieged the little shed from which was dispensed relief, and the “sugar cure,” as they called it! Elihu Burritt returned to us, worn and exhausted, from his tour in the west and south.

One afternoon we went with him to Greenbank to a meeting of friends, called together by the Brights. How clearly I recall him, as he stood and quietly told his story; his tall, gaunt figure; clear-cut, thin, almost transparently *spirituelle* features; full, dark brown, pitying eyes, and smooth auburn hair, quaintly parted down the centre! His countenance, a man's, and one other, a woman's (that of Josephine Butler), are the only two human faces that have ever struck me as ideally typical of Jesus Christ as He might have looked when upon earth. The impression in both cases was clear and spontaneous, and has never weakened.

Entranced and horror-struck, he held us there.

He had seen all, gone down to the depths, taken the dying child from the stiffened clasp of its mother, lying dead by the roadside! All this, and more, may be read of in other places, but to this day the word "Skibbereen" brings back again skeleton visions that one would fain forget.

It was then believed that, the heart and conscience of England once awakened, such pitiful conditions could never again exist in the British Isles. It is hardly conceivable that as I now (in 1898) copy the above extracts from notes made long ago, there comes again a bitter cry for help from the wronged and famine-stricken country; once more is the heart of Lancashire stirred to its depths by the saddening revelations of Mr. Long in the *Manchester Guardian*. But, along with pity, is roused the burning, indignant query,—is this the result of over fifty years of England's ruling of Ireland according to English ideas? I dare not pursue this painful subject here; suffice it, that some years before Mr. Gladstone arrived at his convictions and policy, Mr. Jacob Bright, sitting with other friends at our dinner-table in Bowdon, said, after a long discussion, "Well, if I were an Irishman, I should be a Home Ruler!" with which utterance Mr. Mills and Alexander Ireland both heartily agreed. Youthful recollections of the miseries of 1846-47, and the sickness of "hope deferred," doubtless were powerful factors in their arrival at this conclusion. These two never

changed this opinion, and all the world knows with what steady unflinching loyalty Jacob Bright, in his wider public parliamentary sphere, supported Mr. Gladstone in his Home Rule policy.

During his stay in Ireland I received the following letter from Elihu Burritt :—

“BANDON, IRELAND, Feb. 18, 1847.

“MA CHÈRE ISABEL,—Here I am in this land of wan misery and woe. I am in the midst of scenes that would melt a stony heart to sympathy. I have been out among the cabins —dark habitations of want and pale despair. But I will not try to describe it. I am going to Skibbereen, Bantry, and other distressed districts, to see with my own eyes and to describe with my own pen to my countrymen, and to arrange for the appropriation of the provisions and clothing that may be sent from America, in consequence of my appeals. Hope to return to England by the 1st of March, when I intend to pass through Rochdale on my way to Scotland.—Till then, farewell!

ELIHU BURRITT.”¹

While Mr. Burritt was with us, a Mr. Bradshaw, from Manchester, came once or twice to see him, and he also went to visit Mr. Bradshaw, who was a warm admirer of and a great help to Elihu Burritt in his “Olive Branch” work. I think he formed one of the party who went to the Peace Convention in Paris. We were interested in meeting him as the editor of *Bradshaw’s Journal*, a favourite paper so long as it lasted. He was, however, in later years, best known as the founder and owner of “Bradshaw’s Railway Guide.”

¹ Appendix, p. 350.

Frederick Douglass, then just escaped from slavery, came to Rochdale, and for some time, in 1846, made his home at South Street, and sometimes at Greenbank, forming a friendship that, amidst all the vicissitudes of his after life, remained unbroken.¹

A subscription, the idea of which originated with Ellen Richardson (a well-known philanthropic Quaker lady), was raised, with which to purchase Frederick Douglass. When with us in 1846, he one day came in with tears of joy in his eyes, to show us a beautiful letter just received from his little ten-year-old daughter, Rosetta, who he feared was going blind. She was under the charge of Lucretia Mott and her sisters—whose work in the anti-slavery cause, and in connection with the “under-ground railway,” is known all the world over.

“ALBANY, October 20, 1846.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I wish to write to you now to tell you that my eyes are almost well. Miss Mott says that you will feel uneasy and anxious to know. I was very blind when Miss Mott wrote her letter. I have just begun to read and write again. Oh, how happy you will be to hear that I can see again. I thought then how you would pity me if only you knew how blind I was. The Miss Motts held me in their arms all the time I was not asleep.

“Miss Mott told me that you visited a great many blind children, and they felt of you because they could not see you, and they had heard of you before you came to see them. Oh, how sorry I felt for them that they could not see you!

“I wonder if it snows where you are; it snows here to-day, and I love to see it snow. . . . My dear father, if you were here now, oh happy, how happy I should be!”

¹ Appendix, p. 393.

"October 23.

"Oh, my dear father, how glad I was this morning when Miss Mott handed me your letter. I kissed it over and over again, and when I read it, oh happy, oh how happy it made me ! It was such a dear, sweet letter. Why, my dear father, how can I forget you when we talk about you every hour in the day ! Oh no, my dear father, your little Rosa can never forget you ; then I have so many of your dear letters, and you tell me so how you love me. . . . Miss Abigail and Miss Lydia are very much delighted with your last letter. . . . My dear father, you say that you show my letters to little girls. Why, father, I did not think that you would show them, there is something private in them. Father, you say that you dreamed that I did not know you when you met me, I did not smile or look pleased. That was very strange for you to dream that I did not know you, for I shall know you if I only hear you say 'Rosa,' even should you speak to me in the dark. I do not dream, I sleep so sweetly. I do not remember what I think when I am asleep, but Miss Abigail says she can give me her dream as an offset to my father's dream. . . . But Miss Mott says she don't believe in dreams—do you, father ?

"Miss Lydia desires me to give a great deal of love to you. This is from your loving little daughter,

"ROSETTA DOUGLASS."

Then came the Chartist riots and various strikes, all matters of history now. Not long after Mr. Mills came to Rochdale, in 1845, we really for a time lived in terror. It was noticed that many Irishmen came into the town, and a vague, uneasy feeling existed all round. My brothers and their neighbouring friends formed a sort of bodyguard for the protection of their homes, taking in turns all-night watches, and armed with lanterns and pistols. Nothing happened, however, till one night, hearing shots, my sister Margaret and I crept to

the window, and saw quickly-moving lantern lights, accompanied by occasional shots and loud, significant whistling. Then all was quiet. The patrol had heard footsteps below and in the garden, and seen the flash of a lantern, so gave alarm and chase; but all in vain. Two days after one of the boys came in great excitement to tell us that they had discovered, hidden in the haystack at the bottom of the garden, several pikes. Further search was made, and nearly a hundred were found; murderous-looking weapons they were, with a short handle and long polished blade. We shuddered as we watched them piled into a cart to be taken off to the Town Hall; one specimen was for a long time kept by us hung up on a wall. The very day after that a note was brought to my brother John from John Mills, who had some appointment with him, "Cannot join you to-night; all the clerks remaining in the bank, armed for defence, in case of need!" Getting desperate, the people came pouring in from surrounding places. One day I and my sister, walking home up Yorkshire Street, were suddenly told to "turn back and get out of the way!" We hastily took refuge in a house near, which proved to be a bread and provision shop; the owner was then hastily putting up shutters, locking doors, &c. Soon the hoarse roar of angry voices was heard, and we, from the third storey, where we were sent for safety, watched Mr. Wood throwing down, from the win-

dows above the shop, loaves, cakes, provisions, everything eatable. Never did we forget the sea of angry, white upturned faces, the long thin arms, the eager, clawing fingers outstretched to catch the food flung out to those famished creatures ! A little lower down the street a shop was being wrecked, and the contents flung out into the street ; and so the miserable *mélée* went on until the Riot Act was read—George Ashworth, J.P., being first pulled off his horse ; and the soldiers with some difficulty dispersed the mob.

What a stride from all this to the trade strikes of to-day, which seem to us in comparison as a kind of “ personally conducted ” tournament !—fought, not with pike and pistol, and by wrecking of machinery, but with *quite other weapons* ! Thanks to Trade Unionism, men have found that, righteously used, union is strength ; also that the moral force of public opinion is a more powerful agent for or against them than any number of steel pikes or guns. True, of late “ Jeshurun ” has “ waxed fat and kicked,” but he has had a lesson by which, it is to be hoped, he will greatly profit.

In 1845 I went to London to the great Anti-Corn-Law League bazaar in the old Covent Garden Theatre, the sisters of John Bright being, of course, our leaders. It lasted a fortnight, and on our return home there were plenty of stories to tell of our experiences. Mr. Mills, who had meanwhile been roaming alone in his beloved Lake-land, had

his account to give of his wanderings, and above all, of his interview with Wordsworth, already described. In 1847 he again spent his holiday there, and again saw Wordsworth, of which time I have no record, and but one remembrance, viz., a note saying what a good time and long talk he had had, and that “certainly we must be married next summer as arranged, for when I told Mr. Wordsworth about it, and that we meant to have our honeymoon amongst the Lakes, he said, ‘Bring your bride with you to see me,’ so, you see, that settles it.”

In 1846 came the final triumph—the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the celebration held in July on Cronkeyshaw Moor. Every one was there; Elihu Burritt rode in John Bright’s carriage, the sun shone, the bands played—“It was a glorious victory !”

After 1848 a lull in the storm seemed to fall upon the land—a breathing space. The good Prince Albert dreamed a dream of binding the nations together in the common interests of commerce; and when his work resulted in the Great Exhibition of 1851, people thought “Surely the millennium was dawning, a new era born, and that *war was to cease for ever amongst the nations of Europe!*” Notwithstanding all these outer distractions, the short residence of Mr. Mills in Rochdale was not devoid of literary and intellectual influence and profit. He joined the Literary and Philosophical Society, which, founded by John Bright, was then active and flourish-

ing. In the winter of 1845 he gave at the Athenæum a lecture on Education ; became organist at Baillie Street Chapel, which we attended, and a member of the Musical Society ; and before long he, with a few like-minded friends, formed a reading circle. Amongst these were Jacob and Grattan Bright. In later years Mr. Mills, assuming, with a twinkling eye, the air of a reformed rake confessing to the "wild oats" of his youth, would tell how he, Grattan Bright, and Harry Moore, took some private and surreptitious dancing-lessons in Rochdale—the Quaker and the Methodist !

In 1846, just before the repeal of the Corn Laws, further Bank promotion took him back to Ashton, to live at home again. The old "Mutual" being scattered, most of his spare time was spent in Manchester, amongst his literary friends, and in Rochdale. Attracted by what he had read of German literature, he became discontented with the limitations of translations, and meeting somewhere a cultivated Herr Professor Lang—a political exile who was reduced to sore straits—John Mills not only began to take lessons from him, but got classes formed for him in Ashton, Oldham, and Rochdale. I recall how he expatiated to us on the beauties of German literature, and induced Esther Bright and, I think, two of her brothers, to take lessons. Of course I had to tackle it. Our little class met once a week, but the fever was upon him, and for a month or two he

worked every spare hour of every day and up to late at night, and before we could slowly, by help of a dictionary, make out a simple paragraph, he was reading with ease and understanding Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul.

This German craze led to an amusing incident, very typical of the standpoint of view of the good people around us. One day a lady—a prominent member of our church—called upon my father and mother, “to venture as an old friend, knowing his firm orthodoxy, and how all-important in his view it was that a man should be a Christian, &c., to warn him as to that young Mr. Mills who played the organ, whom she had heard wanted to marry his daughter, &c. &c., for he was an Atheist!!” (Huxley had not then invented that comfortable word “Agnostic.”)

“But,” he asked, “why do you say this? What reason is there for such an accusation?”

“Oh! he reads those dreadful German books—what they call ‘Neology,’ all about Pantheism—and Pan was a sort of heathen god, you know! I felt I must for your sake and hers come and tell you; please don’t be offended! Besides, he is drawing others away; several others are studying German; he asked my son to join, but, no thank you, I saved him from that snare, and his father forbade it.”

And so, with sundry portentous nods and head-shakings, she departed.

This happened just at the crisis of our fate, when we were both on the tenter-hooks of suspense, hoping for consent to our engagement. The year before, it had been refused on the ground that I was, at seventeen, yet too young to take such a serious step. In this, as in all other transactions with his children, my father was so kind, just, and reasonable, that disobedience would have been too painful, and so absolutely trustful as to our honour as to render subterfuge impossible. No embargo was laid upon correspondence; he only stipulated that for another year we should meet only as friends, and on ordinary, usual occasions. The year of probation was nearly over, and Mr. Mills, then living in Ashton, was looking day after day for reply to a letter he had written, urging earlier decision, and just then this solemn, friendly warning was given.

When the good lady had departed my father looked very grave, seeing which, his wife, who had sat by listening, but saying nothing, said, "Now, father, don't take all this in, or worry about it without inquiry; just see Mr. Mills himself, and talk it over. I am sure it will be all right!" This wise counsel was at once taken, for it was a matter of much greater concern to him, as affecting his children's happiness, than any question of money or position. He wrote asking Mr. Mills to meet him in Manchester one day, where they dined and spent some time together. My dear mother had

given me a hint that they were to meet (I knew nothing then, though, as to the "Atheistic" charges). I heard my father come in alone, and did not dare to go downstairs until called. During tea-time not a word was said, only my father was very lively, full of jokes, teasing my mother, who took all quietly, as if there were not a little fevered soul sitting there, almost ill with anxiety. Then, just as he was leaving the house for some evening meeting, I went to help him on with his coat, when he turned round and said casually, "Oh, perhaps thou hadst better stay in to-night, a friend may call," and marched off. The "friend" did call, told me all that had passed that afternoon, that all objections were withdrawn and free consent given. We wondered what the kind lady friend would think, but were very grateful to her for having so unwittingly hastened the conclusion of the whole matter.

Early in 1844 he met Mr. Ireland, and saw much of him in 1845 in connection with literary work done for the *Examiner*, of which Mr. Ireland was then literary manager, Mr. Ballantyne taking the political department. In 1846 the *Examiner*, which was founded by Mr. Watkin, John Bright, and Dr. M'Kerrow, amalgamated with Mr. Archibald Prentice's paper *The Times*, and was henceforth known as the *Examiner and Times*, with Alexander Ireland as business manager, and Mr. Paulton as editor.

After Mr. Paulton's retirement in 1854, Mr. Dunckley ("Verax") became editor, Mr. Ireland again taking up much of the literary as well as the business department.

By special request, Mr. Mills went to Birmingham to write the musical criticism of Mendelssohn's "Elijah," given for the first time in England, and personally conducted by the composer.

Soon acquaintance ripened into close friendship, into a lifelong affection, that grew with the years, and never knew jar or cloud. Alexander Ireland needs no recalling to the memory of those yet living in Manchester, who have lately had to grieve for the loss from our midst of so delightful a personality. He seemed born to brighten the lives of others; his keen interest in literary matters was only equalled by his quick appreciation of worth or talent wherever he found it, and his readiness to give a helping hand. He saw only the best side of everybody, and encouraged the timid by telling them what he thought of their possibilities. The very contrasts in their natures seemed to bring the two friends closer; Mr. Ireland, social, genial, absolutely free from self-consciousness, never hesitating to make kindly approach to his fellows, especially if by any means he could do them service, and delighting in hospitality, and in introducing people to each other whom he thought sympathetic. He would say, "So-and-so is coming in this evening, I want you to meet him; you will



ALEXANDER IRELAND, 1870,
Age 61.



DR. W. B. HODGSON, 1867,
*Professor of Political Economy,
Edinburgh,
Age 52.*



JOHN MILLS, 1872,
*Banker,
Age 51.*

THE "TRIUMVIRATE."

forgather at once, I know." Mr. Mills, socially shy, shrinking from making advances to any stranger, especially if in any way notable, yet, once the Rubicon passed, quickly responsive, found in his friend just what he needed, and an introduction to a wide, congenial circle, literary and musical. Dr. Hodgson was then Principal of the Chorlton High School, and soon became an intimate and lifelong friend. We used to call Alexander Ireland, Hodgson, and Mills the "Triumvirate," for through life their interests—in literature, business, and in domestic life—seemed almost inseparable.

Whatever joy or sorrow affected one, touched deeply the others. It was Dr. Hodgson, afterwards Professor of Political Economy in Edinburgh, who influenced Mr. Mills greatly in his attitude towards and interest in questions of Political and Social Economy, and their correspondence was enormous. The sudden death of the Doctor at Brussels, in 1880, was the first break in this beautiful union of hearts, and a great shock and sorrow to the two survivors.

Mr. Ireland married, in 1839, Eliza Mary Blyth, a daughter of Frederick Blyth, of Birmingham, of an old Unitarian family, and niece of Mrs. Schwann, of Huddersfield. She died in 1842, at the birth of her second child, leaving one son and one daughter (Mary), and when he first met Mr. Mills Mr. Ireland was just emerging from the shadow of the sorrow that had so wrecked his

domestic life. In the light of this fact the "Lines"¹ to Alexander Ireland, dated 1844, gain a yet deeper meaning.

Mr. Ireland's connection with the press, conjointly with his sympathetic literary tastes, brought him into contact with many literary people of those days, whose names have now become household words, such as Leigh Hunt, Geraldine Jewsbury, Carlyle, Mrs. Gaskell, De Quincey, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, Robert Cox, &c. Robert Chambers was an intimate friend from boyhood, and to many later literary notabilities Mr. Ireland was ever an appreciative, helpful friend. His long friendship with Emerson is best told in his own "Personal Recollections." He delighted in dispensing the hospitalities of his editorial den; his hearty "Come awa', come awa', and hae a crack!"—"de omnibus rebus"—was a welcome in itself.

I had the pleasure lately of meeting at the house of Mr. Henry Acton, who was for so long literary and editorial manager of the *Manchester Guardian*, his elder brother, Roger Acton. In recalling old times, he gave us an interesting and graphic description of the little afternoon teas in Mr. Ireland's room at Newall's Buildings, then the home of the *Examiner and Times*. Almost every day some one or more of the old leaguers would drop in; John Bright and Mr. Cobden often, Jacob Bright, Milner-

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 24.

Gibson, Harry Rawson, Mr. Peacock, Dr. M'Kerrow, Dr. Hodgson, Archibald Prentice, &c., and sometimes Edwin Waugh, John Stores Smith, and Charles Swain, of another ilk, and "hae mony a crack" over the cups of tea which Alexander Ireland always made, and enjoy the little triangular pieces of well-buttered toast, always a feature of that simple repast. Roger Acton was then only a young member of the staff, but to watch and listen to these veterans was a treat that he still recalls with great delight. In a few years he left for London, and, as is well known, was for some thirty years before his retirement connected with the *Illustrated London News*.

In a letter to me Mr. Mills says, "Ireland is constantly laying me under fresh kindly obligations, and seems as though he can never do enough for me." He was not contented until he had "made us know," and go to meet, his beloved brother-in-law, Edmund Kell Blyth, and as the years went on our esteem and affection for him and his wife increased steadily. Music formed a strong tie between Mr. Mills and Mr. Blyth, and many delightful evenings were spent at Hampstead, joining in vocal music of every kind, Mr. Basil Martineau being often one of the party. Mr Blyth is widely known as a solicitor, and his Life of his friend, "William Ellis," is a standard and valuable contribution to educational literature. He and Mr. Mills made the

tour of Italy in 1869, and the four friends—Dr. Hodgson, Alexander Ireland, Mr. Blyth, and Mr. Mills—had some most enjoyable jaunts together, especially into Devonshire.

In 1866 Mr. Ireland married Miss Annie Nicholson, of Penrith, a clever and brilliant woman, best known by her “Life and Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle.” She had great sympathy with her husband’s literary pursuits, and often gave him valuable assistance. She died in 1893.

With faculties as yet unimpaired, retaining unabated his keen interest in all the literary and social movements of the day, and a heart as loving and loyal as ever, our dear friend reached a ripe old age, and died, after a few moments’ illness, in 1894, aged eighty-five.

When John Mills heard the sad news he said, “Now I only am left!” How much he felt the loss was told by his, all that day, taking short restless turns alone in the garden, then coming in and sitting down to his organ, pouring out his soul in sad improvisings, in minor cadences, and sometimes in triumphant chords. Without a word, we knew all he would have said, all his feeling. He himself was then failing, and at last I had to gently close the instrument and get him to retire.

In March 1848 Mr. Mills was invited to go and take me with him to meet Emerson at Dr. Hodgson’s house in Broughton. We had already heard Emerson lecture, and were greatly excited

and delighted at the prospect of meeting him. Alexander Ireland, of course, was there, Henry Sutton, Mr. Espinasse, and others. During the evening I noticed, with envy, some of the ladies take up their albums, evidently purposely brought, and Mr. Emerson giving them his autograph, just name and date. Summoning up a little courage, and determined to get something for myself, I watched for a quiet moment, when he was standing looking at the book-shelves, now and then opening a volume and carefully replacing it. Going up to him I said, "Mr. Emerson, I have no album, so will you please give me just a thought as well as your name?" Smiling, he took a letter out of his pocket-book, tore off the blank sheet, and wrote off these words—¹

"As sings the pine-tree in the wind,
So sings in the wind a sprig of the pine.

R. W. EMERSON.

"MANCHESTER, 2 March 1848."

Mr. Henry Sutton, as is well known, was one of the few people Emerson specially expressed a wish to meet when he came to England, the "Evangel of Love" having greatly pleased him. Not only in Nottingham, then Henry Sutton's home, did they meet, but Emerson invited him to be his guest for some days in his rooms in Manchester. Mr. Mills also had at this time several much-valued opportunities of meeting and conversing with Emerson.

¹ See page 346.

CHAPTER IV

ONE of the most precious and sacred memories of those days is that of my friendship with Esther Bright, the youngest of John Bright's sisters. How much she did for me, how much she became to me, words cannot tell! Older (by eight years) than myself, in advance intellectually, and by virtue of rare personal attractions able to command and enjoy any amount of congenial and cultivated society at home and in London, I can never cease to wonder how it came about that she bestowed upon me such a wealth of affection and confidence. Doubtless I gave to her the grateful, passionate worship often inspired in girls of nineteen by a nobler and older woman. The hurly-burly of 1846 over, all seemed to have more time for personal interests ; and it was not until then that I was more than a very occasional visitor at Greenbank. Mr. Mills' friendship for Jacob Bright from 1845 had already made him a welcome visitor there, and no one rejoiced more in our engagement than Esther Bright. She was then with her brothers in the old home, and lived for their happiness, a close bond of sympathy in every way uniting herself and her beloved brother Jacob.

The same strong tie existed between John Bright and the elder sister Priscilla (Mrs. M'Laren), who lived with him at "One Ash" until his second marriage in 1847.

Naturally Greenbank became a centre of attraction, and visitors from far and near were many, not only political, but also philanthropic and literary. Surely, when all the family were present, never was such a galaxy of handsome, beautiful men and women, goodness, strength, and sweetness of nature shining out from their faces, emphasised by a never-failing graciousness of manner. There were the three sisters already described, and Jacob, the honoured brother, in whose career two qualities stand out prominently—the one, steady consistency, so rare in these chameleon days; the other, his earnest, faithful championship of the claims of women to equality of citizenship, which will ever be a bright, if not the brightest, spot in his escutcheon. But Esther, I think, outshone them all. Tall and fair, with large massive head, and a wealth of auburn-brown hair, she moved like a queen, with a stately dignity mellowed by tenderness and charity for all mankind. Lovely to look upon, with a smile that at once lit up a rather serious face, and large and full eyes, with a touch always in them of questioning sadness, born of much pondering upon the miseries and mysteries of life. It was told us that some of the distinguished and noble men, then exiles from the Continent, who

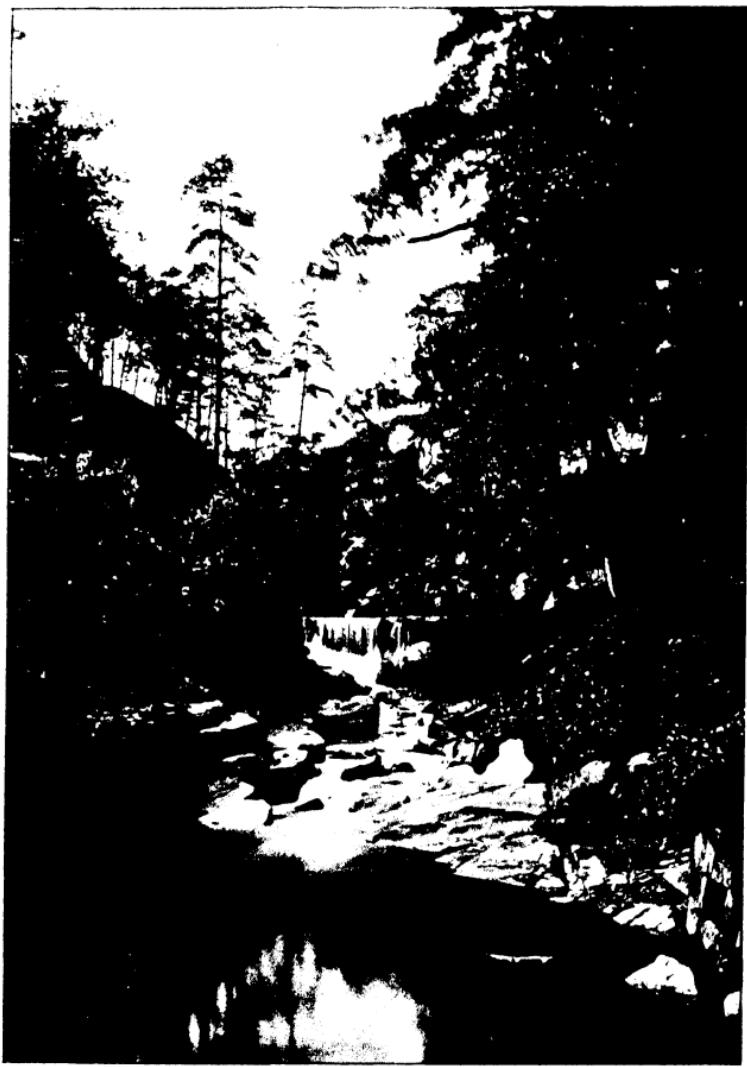
gathered under the hospitable roof of Justice Tal-fourd, had said, after a reception, that "Mr. Bright's sister fulfilled their ideal of the finest type of an Englishwoman." She mostly wore then a long plain dress of black silk velvet; I remember it well, and don't wonder!

Ah! if that plain Quaker father, sitting at his fireside enjoying his long clay pipe, could but have realised the honour God had put upon him in giving him children who should, one by one, go forth from the old house at Greenbank, carrying help and blessing in all directions to his country, his patriotic heart would indeed have been filled with a grateful and blameless pride!

Music was to Esther a delight. In quiet seasons one of her treats was to get John Mills to come and discourse sweet music for her upon a piano she ventured to buy after her father's marriage and removal to Yorkshire. Technically she knew nothing of it; but when he explained the construction of some sonata of Beethoven, or melody of Mendelssohn, that had charmed her whole soul, she was an apt learner, and would say, "Now, please, play it all again!" He once said, alluding to the ancestral Jewish element in the family, "The Rebecca evidently has not extinguished the Miriam in you! The spirit of music is in you, and you have missed a great joy in your life by not learning to play in your childhood!" But of course that had been out of the question, as

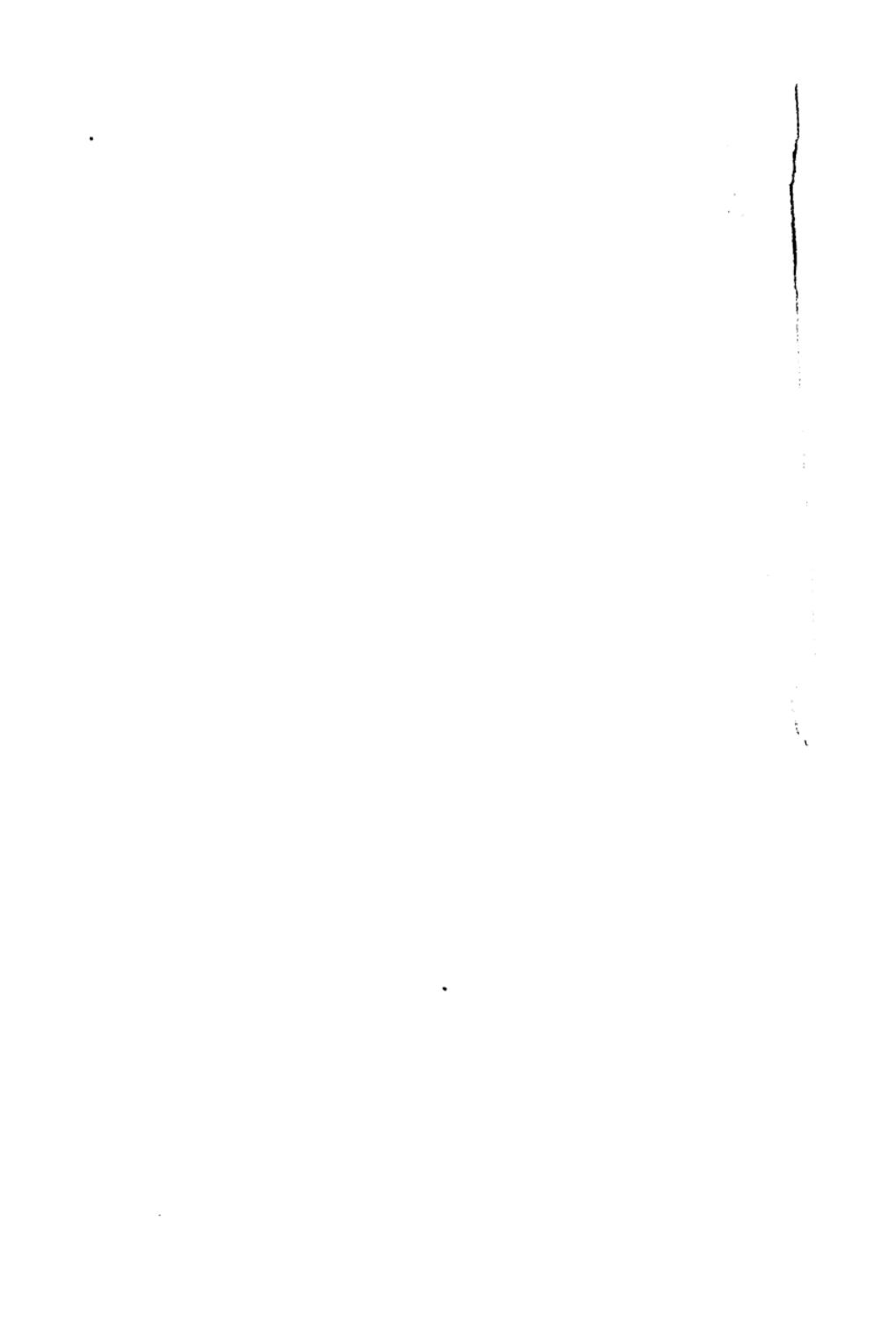
the Quakers at that time did not allow music in their families.

We, Esther and myself, now began a course of reading under the guidance of Mr. Mills, and much of it was done in this wise. I would receive a note from her as follows: "I am sending the pony carriage at eleven; bring the books, and we will go to Simpson Clough." Sometimes it was to Healey Dell—"Thrutch," as it is still called—both beautiful spots, but Healey Dell was the favourite. Carrying books and little lunch-baskets down to the water-side, we sent the groom back to fetch us as ordered. Here in the summer sunshine, on the grassy bank flecked with tree-shadows and bright with flowers—the Spodden rushing by, hastening on its way to the Roach to turn the waterwheel of the little flour-mill, and the larks singing overhead—we sat or lay, a new world of thought and literature opening before us. Both longing for a wider outlook; both by reason of Quaker and Puritan training having had very limited reading, we eagerly drank in whatever was given to us, marking pages sometimes for question or remark when next our "guide, philosopher, and friend" came over. When reading descriptions of the delight of the little city children, who, having never seen a daisy grow, were taken into the country, I imagine we, hungering and thirsting for "more light," must have felt something akin to their surprise and joy. Emerson's



HEALEY DELL, ROCHDALE.

[To face p. 148.]



"Over Soul," "Compensation," and "Love"; Carlyle, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and much of Coleridge, were read there.

In a letter from our "Master," as she playfully called him, written in 1846, he says, "I wish you would both read Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection'; it is unequalled; you will find it at Hartley's library." We obeyed, but he had to come with the key before we could understand much of it.

At that time I remember Esther was much troubled by many doubts and religious perplexities that had not disturbed me much, and sometimes, they two soaring somewhat beyond me, I would leave them to it. Once after her marriage she said to me, referring to that time, "Your husband and Coleridge gave me some 'ballast' that I have been glad of ever since!" Many pious people have recounted their recollections of the very time of their conversion, of conscious change of outlook and of life; well we, after the reading of Carlyle's "Essays" and "Sartor," suddenly knew that we no longer "saw men as trees walking," but realised the significance of that saying; and every human being became a fresh living interest, a vitalised "Ego."

During that winter we, Mr. Mills and myself, had the privilege of seeing in the evenings many notable people whom otherwise we should never

have met personally. Sometimes the day after such a gathering—if we went for a walk—she would say, “Now, little chiel, whaur are your notes?” There came the Hutchinson family, Abby and her brothers, sweet singers all in a good cause; the group of men who had done chivalrous work for Free Trade—A. W. Paulton, George Wilson, Mr. Cobden, C. P. Villiers, the Schwabes, R. R. R. Moore, Alexander Ireland, and also Francis Espinasse, James Silk Buckingham, and Sharman Crawford, M.P. for Rochdale. Of the latter two Mrs. M'Laren in a recent letter says—

“When lectures were given by notable men, they were joyfully received as guests. I can remember when a lecture was a novelty. What a rich revelation to us all were the lectures of James Silk Buckingham, whose visits were felt to be a great privilege! We always delighted to have Sharman Crawford as a guest. ‘An honest man’s the noblest work of God,’ and if ever there was an upright man, it was Sharman Crawford. What would he think, if he could come back and see how hard it is now for a member of Parliament to be an honest man or independent! I have heard many M.P.’s say that, whilst they never or rarely see a letter from a constituent on any political question, they are inundated with begging letters for their games, &c. Dear Sharman Crawford! how we reverenced him for his uprightness! He had no Irish humour, but we got amusement out of his love of drinking his tea out of a small slop-basin, as he said he did not like such a limited quantity of tea as a tea-cup suggested!”

Mrs. M'Laren concludes her letter with a reminiscence of Carlyle’s visit to Manchester—

"It was an event to receive one day a visit from Carlyle, who was brought over by our friend Alexander Ireland. I forget what we were discussing at our high tea, but my brother John Bright strongly dissented from our distinguished visitor on the subject in question. Philanthropic efforts next came on, and Carlyle ridiculed Elizabeth Fry and her work. Elizabeth Fry ranked in my mind as an earthly saviour, and I gave vent with all the moral courage I possessed to the disappointment I felt, that one whose judgment might have so much weight, should speak against her efforts and self-denying life for the amelioration of suffering, and I begged that before young men, especially, he would always advocate the highest aims for the good of others. Carlyle took it all very kindly; perhaps he thought our simple, innocent minds were not worth contending with! In his 'Life' there is some allusion to that evening, and he speaks of 'the' Brightesses as having minds of their own! However, the cynical gave place to an almost angelic mood and expression for the rest of the evening in the drawing-room."

This was in 1847, when Carlyle was staying at Miss Jewsbury's. It was at Miss Jewsbury's on the occasion of this visit that Mr. Mills met Carlyle. When some one remarked that Mr. Mills sang, Carlyle at once asked, "Can he sing a Scotch song?" Mr. Mills has told us how nervous he felt at the idea of singing a Scotch ballad to such a Scotchman; but when, at the end, the Sage gave a grunt of approval, and asked for another song, he plucked up heart, and sang out without further tremors.

What full, happy days were those! Alas! only too short was the time that noble and beautiful woman was given to those who so loved her!

In 1849 she was married to James Vaughan, Barrister, now Stipendiary Magistrate in London; and in the following year she died at the birth of her first child. Just after her marriage she wrote to me as follows:—

MRS. VAUGHAN to MRS. MILLS.

"Thank Mr. Mills for the pretty volume of Longfellow that arrived the day before I left home, and especially for the lines that stand upon the first page. They drew up from the old source some tears as I read them—tears of strange emotion; just then, when the Past, Present, and Future were all blending, words such as these sounded far too cognisant of what was passing in the depths of my own mind's experience, and startled me with their truthfulness. Also tell him that I have got his Beethoven hanging in our little breakfast-room, and a beautiful engraving of St. Cecilia, harp in hand, hangs below. Adieu to you both. God bless you!—Your friend,

"E. VAUGHAN."

"SONNET TO ESTHER BRIGHT

ON HER APPROACHING MARRIAGE

"Life is all holy; and thy Past, dear Friend,
 Lies far behind thee, but the moments few
 Which interlink that old time with the new,
 Up from the level memoried years ascend,
 And lead thee with a trembling haste to rend
 The mystic veil from that most holy shrine
 On which Life's dreams and destinies entwine,
 And Hopes with their divine fruitions blend.



Thenceforth Love shuts thee in from common sight,
But bear our earnest benisons with thee ;
Thy world be, as thine aspirations, bright ;
May Art enrich, while Nature keeps thee free,
And may the Soul thou hast elected prove
Deep as thine own for worship and for Love.

1849.

J. M."

Lancashire Public School Association.

1847.—And now certain thoughtful men, foreseeing clearly that ultimately power must, in the near future, lie with the people, were deeply impressed by the need of national education. If Demos was to be king, then Demos must go to school and be trained to make the best use of his power. So it came about that in 1847 a meeting of a few earnest men at the Mechanics' Institute, Manchester, resulted in the drawing up of the scheme of the "Lancashire Public School Association." Amongst these were Samuel Lucas, Jacob Bright, the Rev. Francis Tucker, Dr. John Watts, John Mills, F. Espinasse, Rev. W. M'Kerrow, John Stores Smith, Rev. Dr. Davidson (Lancashire Independent College), &c. &c. Mr. Mills gave much thought to this movement. The scheme which, it was hoped, but hoped in vain; might be first tried in Lancashire, was merged, in 1850, into the "National Public School Association." Alexander Henry, Dr. Beard, Sir B. Heywood, R. Cobden,

Hugh Mason, and Mr. Nodal joined the committee. Papers were read by many of the above gentlemen at conferences, by Mr Mills in Rochdale in '47, in Liverpool in '50, and in Ashton in '52. His most important paper, which was printed and largely circulated, and is still extant, is said to be as appropriate to the present state of this question as though written to-day. An obituary notice in the *Rochdale Observer*, dated September 30, 1896, says, "All his life Mr. Mills was deeply interested in the question of popular education. He was one of the bold and far-seeing men who, through the medium of the Lancashire Public School Association, made a gallant attempt some fifty years ago to bring about a settlement on principles which, though plainly making headway, are even now not completely accepted by the nation. On February 8, 1850, he read a paper in Liverpool on 'The Principles and Aspects of the Education Question.' He thus described the fundamental principles of the Society's proposals:—

"1st. The widest possible distribution of the burden and advantages of an educational system by means of local rating.

"2nd. The completest possible culture in kind and quality consistent with religious freedom of the law of conscience.

"3rd. The right of the school ratepayers to control the executive power by means of representation."

The *Manchester Guardian* also truly said, “Mr. Mills was an active member of the ‘Lancashire Public School Association,’ the principles of which he never relinquished during the subsequent times of compromise.”

There is little doubt that Samuel Lucas, the brother-in-law of John Bright, was the originator of this scheme, and his zeal and constant effort never failed. Though Mr. Mills would not have his name published on the first committee, he was constantly consulted on the various movements. A letter or two from Mr. Lucas will indicate their relations and their mutual efforts :—

S. LUCAS to J. MILLS.

“3 CROSS STREET,
“MANCHESTER, November 26, 1847.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I understand that the Revs. R. Fletcher and Gwyther are to attend our next committee meeting on Tuesday as visitors with Mr. M’Kerrow. I am anxious there should be a large attendance on the occasion. It is also intended to consider the course that should be taken by the Association in the present session of Parliament. On both these accounts I hope you will make it convenient to be present.—I am, &c.,
SAMUEL LUCAS.”

S. LUCAS to J. MILLS.

“February 1848.

“MY DEAR MILLS,—Is there any popular tradesman in Ashton who would promote the plan amongst the working-classes? We must leave no means untried to disarm opposition as well as to gain adherents. I am glad to see you have

established a periodical. With friends at our command we might do a great deal by the issue of cheap publications on the subject of education amongst the people. The public must be prepared by lectures and through the press before we can venture to hold public meetings. I shall be glad to hear any suggestions you may have to make.—Most truly yours,

“SAMUEL LUCAS.”

[To face p. 157.]

BEN-RHYDDING.



CHAPTER V

Ben Rhydding, Yorkshire.—It has already been told how, after Mr. Petrie's illness and recovery at Ben Rhydding, his family became frequent, almost yearly, visitors there. After our marriage we continued to go there pretty regularly from 1848 to 1875, the date of Dr. Macleod's death, and at longer intervals up to a few years before my husband's death. Not to mention Ben Rhydding here, would be to omit one of the pleasantest and most profitable elements of our life. The stress of increasing business responsibilities limited greatly our opportunities for travel, study, or society, and fresh contact with such a variety of cultivated, intelligent minds as he met there was to Mr. Mills very refreshing and helpful. In one letter he says, “We get here a mental as well as physical douche, and one helps the good effect of the other.”

Little description is needed, so widely known are the Wharfe Valley and the fine baronial-looking mansion high up on the moor-side, with its woods and gardens and wide outlook over Denton Park and Middleton Woods, and above the house the two sentinel rocks known as the

“Cow and Calf” standing out in bold, protecting outline.

There must be yet living many people who can recall with delight the palmy days of Ben Rhydding. It was then the favourite resort of many interesting and cultivated people, amongst them a large contingent of Quaker families. The Brights, the Peases (Elizabeth Pease, who married Professor Nicoll, of Edinburgh, almost lived there), the Backhouses, Gurneys, Priestmans were familiar names, also Isaac Holden, Illingworth, and Houldsworth, with a large sprinkling of artists, literary men, Americans, and well-known divines and philanthropists. Later on we met Miss Muloch (Mrs. Craik) and Octavia Hill, just then occupied heart and soul in the work of carrying out in London some of Mr. Ruskin’s ideas, also Lyon Playfair, and an adopted sister of Mr. Ruskin’s (in 1847). Time after time we met the same people, and formed many lasting friendships. The whole place, with its nearly two hundred guests, resounded with life and activity, a merry and motley crew in search of health under the pleasantest conditions. The doctor’s ringing laugh was considered part of the cure, when heard about the house, in the grounds, and especially at the dinner-table. Just set him off *there*, and though at the other end of the room, you heard and saw it rippling along, and soon found yourself joining in from sheer infection. He was merciless

in making his patients, especially the younger ones, take plenty of exercise. Up to the "Cow" before breakfast, calling at the fountain both on the way up and back, to drink prescribed quantities of that delicious cold water. One bitter winter day, coming in and finding us sitting round the fire, he sent off for spades, shovels, and brushes, and turned all out, ladies and gentlemen, to clear from the terrace the deep snow that made it impassable. What fun it was! Yet, even then, as we filed out and he stood there laughing, he quietly stopped two or three with "No, not you!" Yet, unknown to most of the inmates, what sad and perhaps hopeless cases were there, and with what close attention and tender sympathy he watched and helped, often taking in freely some failing minister, or author, or struggling artist, and rejoicing like a boy when able to send them out to take a fresh start in life's battle. His bright, pretty, young Scotch wife being always in these cases a true helpmate, of a sensitive and rather reserved nature, she was subjected now and then to mistaken criticisms. I recollect a rich lady who expected much attention, by virtue perhaps of her wealth and position (qualities that happily were by no means in that atmosphere a special passport to favour or popularity), saying, with a toss of the head, "Well, Mrs. Macleod does not give us much of her time; I've been here two weeks, and seen little of her, even though I have my own private

sitting-room!" A sweet elderly "Friend," sitting by, looked up and said, "Perhaps thou misjudgest somewhat; Helen Macleod has her family duties to attend to, but if thou couldst visit the rooms of the real invalid, the suffering confined to bed or room, depressed and weary of life, thou wouldest find she had been there, and often books, choicest grapes, and gay flowers would, as well as the grateful words of the inmate, tell thee of her gracious and comforting ministry!" No reply was made; many of us knew well how true and opportune was this gentle reproach.

Noel Paton was often there as a friend of Dr. and Mrs. Macleod. Above the mantelpiece in the drawing-room was a large, handsome mirror, reaching to the ceiling. One morning, as the guests were assembling before breakfast, an alarm was raised, "Look at the mirror!" And lo! there was a deep, irregular, slanting crack right across the glass! The doctor was fetched, servants sent for, questions asked, but no one knew anything about it. "Had any of the boys thrown a cricket-ball at it? If so, let him confess!" But all was in vain. Just when the doctor was getting very mystified and vexed, Noel Paton, who had been standing quietly by, said, "Just let me have a step-ladder and I'll examine it." The ladder was brought, he mounted, and, taking a cloth out of his pocket, rubbed it over the mirror—and the crack was gone! He had crept in quietly early in the morning, and

painted it across with common yellow soap. The delusion was perfect. What a shout there was! And the doctor, after shaking his fist at him, clapped him on the back, and marched him down to breakfast. That was pabulum enough for one day! The musical evenings were a great treat to Mr. Mills. Kitty Macleod, the eldest daughter, had a splendid soprano voice, which went well with Mr. Mills' fine baritone, a voice true as resonant, with a rare sympathetic timbre, which increased in range and power as he grew older, until whilst touching the lowest bass notes he easily, without any loss of force or sweetness, reached the "chest A" in "Sound an Alarm!"

Dr. Morell, Dr. Hodgson, and Alexander Ireland were amongst our own friends. Laura Herford, said to be the first lady artist admitted into the Academy, Millais, Mrs. Lushington (Tennyson's sister), also a younger sister of his, were friends of Dr. and Mrs. Macleod. Dr. John Brown at one time was constantly at Ben Rhydding, his wife being a patient there.

Perhaps the closest and most helpful friendship made at Ben Rhydding was that of Miss Pipe. It was in April 1854 that I was staying there, and Mr. Mills came for a day or two. On his return from a walk he told me, just before leaving, that he had met on the top of the "Cow" a very interesting young lady, who, with her pretty mother, was sitting there

when he arrived, that they had got into talk, which delayed his coming down. Of course I found her out, and wrote that evening telling him who she was, &c. In reply he wrote—

"And so my golden-haired friend is a Pipe. I thought Macleod did not tolerate such articles about the premises. I understand now why she hovered about me when I was smoking on the 'Cow.' She wished to see whether I preferred a pipe or a cigar. By no means a Dutch pipe, but with a slender stem and prettily carved head, a pipe easy to keep lighted by means of occasional inspirations. What a cloud I've blown from this Pipe. . . . Don't tumble off the 'Cow,' don't catch the caste fever from Mrs. ——. Finally, don't cease loving with all your little great heart your devoted husband,

"J. M."

When Mr. Mills next came over we had much talk with Miss Pipe, and were greatly drawn to each other, especially when we found that she knew Dr. Hodgson. She and her mother had, about 1849, kept a school in Greenheys. In 1850 Dr. Hodgson gave a series of lectures, or "talks," on "Teaching," inviting any teachers of schools to hear him. Eagerly did Miss Pipe avail herself of this privilege. She has told us that "Dr. Hodgson first taught her that she did not know how to teach." In later years, when Miss Pipe had a large and prosperous school at Laleham, he remarked, "Well, if I have only helped her on her way it is reward enough."

It was in the summer of 1856 that they, she and her mother, removed to London. Whilst at Ben

Rhydding I vowed that whatever economy or sacrifice it might entail, our two daughters should in due time go to Miss Pipe, if only for the sake of the gentle but powerful moral and spiritual tone she could impart; and so, not only our two eldest girls, but five out of the six daughters went to her in turn.

Of her large and beneficent influence educationally, not the half can here be told. She was a pioneer in the change of view as to the necessities of education for girls, throwing off many of the old cramped and narrow ideas. Her earliest pupils, now middle-aged, speak of her with unabated love and gratitude, and have sent their children to Laleham, so that she speaks of "having her grandchildren with her," following in their mothers' footsteps. One of these early pupils, now the mother of grown-up sons, writes—

"Miss Pipe was much more than a wise and successful teacher. She awoke, in many of us, that eager and passionate loyalty, which works moral miracles of regeneration and growth. And this loyalty did not stop at mere personal worship. She drew us to herself only to lead us on to higher things, but for us she was their visible embodiment—making goodness lovely, and badness a terror. She was never afraid to show us an unspeakable, yearning love and tenderness, and yet we feared her displeasure as we feared nothing else. This kind of rule was strange to girls from narrow or unloving homes, and they sometimes tried at first to cheat or to rebel. But I have seen them go into her room sulky and defiant, and come out in half-an-hour all broken down, contrite, and wondering, saying—as an Irish girl said to me—'Sure, I didn't know! Sure, I'll

love her all my life!' We were too young to stand where she stood, or see what she saw, but when her face shone we caught the reflected light, and knew its source, and struggled on, the selfish learning love from her very aspect; the dull quickening under that inspiration; the passionate striving after patience; the dreamy and moody growing practical and resolute, rather than disappoint her—and therefore God. It was indeed 'good for us to be there!'"

She now lives in Surrey, having given up Laleham to Miss Swindells, a teacher of her own training.

Of course the recurrence of the visits of the people above named spreads over a long period. It was in 1869 that George Macdonald was staying there, soon after he had been with us at Bowdon. The two daughters of Mr. Justice Mellor (who were always dressed in white) made a strong impression on me, and upon others. Especially did Martha Mellor fascinate me, and we became very sympathetic and friendly; and when she came to Rochdale to visit an aunt there, I had the pleasure of taking her to Greenbank to meet Esther Bright. She and Esther soon became (by force of sympathy in many directions) deeply attached to each other. Not long after, she married Mr. A. W. Paulton, whose unwearying work for the Anti-Corn Laws had ended, and he was then editor of the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. Only a month ago I visited Mrs. Paulton, now eighty-three years of age, yet mentally active and alert, and never needing spectacles, and we sat for hours talking and talking of these old Ben

Rhydding days; she told me how John Bright, she being delicate, took care of her, and paid her all kinds of thoughtful little attentions.

In February 1848, when I was there with my father and mother, Mr. Mills joined us; the house was full, and the interest of the moment was centred upon the daily reports from Paris. All were sitting at breakfast on the morning of the 24th, when in rushed a gentleman with the news, "Louis Philippe has fled to England! Paris is barricaded and fighting! The Revolution is accomplished!" One incident of that exciting day helped to phonograph indelibly on my mind all that passed. At lunch, some one looking round asked, "Where is that dark gentleman?" Since his arrival a week before he had already excited some curiosity, and the kind of conjecture that hovers about the person of a new visitor in such places who shuns society and evades questions. Professedly German, yet, it was said, speaking bad German and broken English, he once in the office burst out into angry but perfect French! The day before this, a lady had joined him, carrying only a small handbag. They were then seen walking about under the trees till long after dark. When the news came he, unobserved by all save one person, quietly slipped out of the room, and, it was ascertained next day, had walked away over the fields, got into a carriage that was waiting at Burley, and driven quickly away. It appeared that the mysterious lady

had left the same night, but slept at Burley. What with the food for wild conjectures arising out of this little episode, and the accounts of the Revolution, there was no lack of excitement, and a pretty Babel of tongues. Dr. Macleod listened and nodded, and squeezed up his wise little blue eyes, and worked his dear rugged features into all sorts of expressions, but said little, and soon Mr. Mills said to me, "Depend upon it, Macleod knows more than we think!" Afterwards I, despite a good deal of chaffing, chose to stick to the theory that the mysterious stranger was Louis Napoleon himself!

This seemed to be the climax of the great public events occurring in the years I have mentioned, 1845 to 1848, the deep interest in which we constantly and mutually shared. The next few months were pretty well absorbed in preparation for our marriage.

CHAPTER VI

Selections from Letters, 1847 to 1848.—“The true life of a man is his letters. Biographers assign motives, conjecture feelings, but contemporary letters are facts.”—(*Dr. Newman to his Sister, Mrs. J. Morley, 1863.*)

UP to 1848 not many letters, save those written to me, are extant. Of these latter only a few, such as are indicative of mood, special traits of character, or refer to public and literary interests, can be given.

In the light of the preceding pages, a short statement as to occasion of writing will in most cases suffice.

[The following letter was sent with some books at a time when, through Mr. Mills' influence, a new world of thought and literature was opened up to us—that is, to myself and my close friend and companion, Esther Bright, youngest sister of John Bright :—]

“The German ‘Faust’ and Filmore’s translation are my own, and may be retained by you for any length of time. In the notes of the translation are several allusions to Ketzch’s outline illustrations ; and believing they would give pleasure, and help to elucidate the drama, I got the loan of them for an indefinite period from a friend. There are several other Eng-

lish translations of ‘Faust,’ one by Hayward and one by Lord Leveson Gower, now Earl of Ellesmere; but Filmore’s as a whole is generally esteemed the best. I myself prefer the blank verse fragments which accompany Ketzch’s outlines as far as they go.

“A great help to you both in realising the subtle spirit of ‘Faust,’ would be a knowledge of the life of Goethe, noting the successive phases of his great mind and soul, from the passionate ardour of youth, which gave birth to ‘Werther’ and ‘Goëtz von Berlichingen,’ on through the struggle period which produced the first part of ‘Faust,’ to the latter stages in which he gradually rose to a calm self-possession and serenity almost god-like, looking down on the turbulent world from a moral and mental elevation, as a man might stand with folded arms on a rock while the waters surge harmlessly at his feet. To some extent Goethe was Teufelsdroch realised in life, or rather, the latter is an idealised Goethe. It would be suggestive of many thoughts to run a parallel between Goethe and our own Byron, both of colossal intellect, but the former having a stronger and deeper nature, both struggling through doubt and evil, but arriving at vastly different goals—Goethe weathering the storm, and arriving in the port of the ‘yea, yea’; Byron, like a coward, betaking himself to the temporary ‘oblivious antidote’ of sensualism, and ending with negation. The difference between the men is the same in kind as between their respective dramas, ‘Manfred’ and the ‘Faust.’ Your joint thoughts on these things would possess great interest.”

“ASHTON, February 14, 1847.

“What a lovely idea is that of yours about the ‘dark perspective’ of imagination when the eyes are closed! It touches a chord in my own soul, and had I leisure I could lose myself in fancies of a kindred nature.

“I should have been last night in Manchester with Ballantyne, Ireland, Peacock, Dr. Smith, and Espinasse—a great symposium—but I excused myself. I hope Alexander will not be displeased, for he was feverishly anxious for me to go. I absent myself from home just now as little as possible, for my poor mother (J. M. being as ‘the light of her eyes’) grows

nervous if I am away for a night, and I am not ashamed of a wish to respect certain old-world notions of hers about late hours. Besides, I can sometimes soothe her to sleep despite severe pain by ‘discoursing sweet music.’”

[The illness of this much-beloved mother was “unto death,” but not until a year or two of great suffering at last undermined a strong constitution.]

[In reply to a letter after our reading of “Faust,” &c. :—]

“ February 20, 1847.

“ I am deeply concerned to hear that you are yet so weak, and trust the projected visit to Ben Rhydding may soon restore your strength. Meanwhile a few words as to your letter. I rejoice that your friend Esther has with you so enjoyed the ‘Faust’ translation I sent you. This sharing of studies with a mind so receptive and eager as hers is a mutual advantage. Do not think that my *idea* of the value of faith differs from yours. It transcends all human possessions, and is second in value only to the eternal realities of which it is the earnest and assurance. But the calmness which characterised the life of Goethe was an essentially different thing from what is called Evangelical faith. It was, I think, founded upon his long habit of observation of Nature, objective and subjective, which led him not to the adoption of a formal series of doctrinal propositions, but to a reliance on the great normal laws of the universe, the supremacy of the soul, and its superiority to material and temporal accidents. I believe he accounted this sufficient, at least he never progressed much further. But to me it does not seem enough ; our ‘thirst and panting for more knowledge, light, and purity’ is a presumptive proof that something better than mere generalities has been provided to quench that thirst. If, in the whole world of sensation and thought, no class of wants has been created without an appro-

priate class of objects adapted to their supply, it would be strange indeed if the cravings of the immortal essence were the sole exception, and doomed to be perpetually baffled until there be no need of either craving or supply. To my mind, one of the strongest evidences of the Incarnation of Christ is its perfect consistency with the whole economy of Nature—that is, adaptation.

"Having read Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection,' you will be aware of the distinction between understanding and reason in the human mind. Religion addresses itself to both these faculties, and as the one receives its materials from the senses, the other from necessary intuitions of truth, it was needful that religion should fulfil both these requirements. How admirably are they both provided for in the two elements of Christ's nature—the human and the divine! The same dualism is observable in the whole circle of religious things. The Bible has its letter and its spirit; there is the form of doctrine and its essence, &c. It is indeed the same principle as you allude to when you say that 'everything seems to have a deeper meaning than its mere outward expression.'

"I do not wonder, because the ideals which underlie all things form a chain of alliances to each other much more rapid and direct than the sluggish process of induction which is the law of physical sequence. Hence the superiority of the *a priori* to the *posteriori* argument in favour of the existence of a God. But I forget myself. I do not ask if I tire you, because the deep interest I take in the details of your own thoughts on these subjects will not allow me to think that you have not the same welcome for mine. Most warmly do I sympathise with you. The idealism which you so beautifully delineate is a distinctive feature of your mind."

[*To BEN RHYDDING.*]

"March 3, 1847.

"DEAREST FRIEND,—I rejoice to hear you are so much better. To-day is a drizzling, douching day; a drenched sparrow in a tree is fluttering off the drops down upon a poor pink patient mezereon. My mother is dozing on the couch-

chair, James is delving for a Greek root, and I am not miserable, for I have thee and our own future full in my eye. God guard us till the nest is snugly lined, and then—‘caw-caw,’—not the gayest black bridegroom in Foxholes Lane shall more tenderly cherish his treasure in the tree than I, especially if I get a *branch* to myself.

“I this morning showed Alexander Ireland the passage in your letter referring to the friendship between him and myself, and its likeness to Emerson’s ideal. I have just sent off a notice of ‘Miall’s Ethics.’ I fear it will be impossible for me to get to Ben Rhydding this week. J. M.”

“March 1847.

“Last night, in a little pilot note, I wrote to say I had not written, and to threaten something grander to-day. Methinks this will seem to you but a pitiful performance of so large a promise, but thou hast not yet to learn that the spirit of love doth not utter itself in words. That ethereal essence, if it ever does get itself exhibited outside its secret chamber, is by the incarnation of a beautiful life; that is to come, please God. Meanwhile we must stammer on with pot-hooks and hangers, and take many infinities for granted.”

“April 3, 1847.

“Let me first thank you for the little extra note received on Wednesday.

“‘Lucretia’ is a work of great power, but very morbid and vitiating. I send you instead, by Mr. Fisher, a delightful little book, the ‘Diary of Lady Mary Willoughby.’

“On Saturday I and Ireland spent a very pleasant evening at a party of German and French ladies and gentlemen in Broughton. (I was the only Englishman present, except one Scotchman and a lady!) Our talk was of music and German literature—Jean Paul, Goethe, and our own Carlyle. I patted myself on the back on finding that I could not only comprehend but speak pretty fluently the German tongue. I was much delighted with the intelligence, acumen, and taste of

Mrs. Behrens (our hostess). About twenty-three years of age, and full of musical enthusiasm, she and I were singing and playing songs and duettos in German for upwards of an hour. On the whole the night was a valuable one to me, not merely for cultivation of taste, but for observation in a new sphere. Ireland, however, had great difficulty to persuade me to go there, for *mauvais honte*, as you know, is a failing of mine. You will, you say, 'rub it off for me in time!' We shall see.

"At Macclesfield, where I am going to visit William, there is a noble organ, which I shall play again to-day, and again lose myself in that sublime mystery of music which the organ alone can make articulate to man and to God.

"I see my review of the 'Messiah' and the 'Creation' is largely quoted into the *Musical Times*. Alexander says that Novello is much pleased with it. *Io triumphans!*"

[*To ME WHEN AT BEN RHYDDING.*]

"ASHTON, June 1847.

"BELOVED PILGRIM,—No county in England can match Yorkshire for vale scenery, and you are now sojourning in the presence of one of its loveliest landscapes. I hope, before leaving Ben Rhydding, you will see Bolton Abbey and the Vales of Wensley and Swale, also Fountains Abbey and Clauvaux. . . . I am delighted to note your susceptibility to the impression made by the beauty of Nature—of Nature, who 'never did betray the heart that loved her!' whose treasures and consolations are cheap and unfailing to us, her lovers, whatever share we may hold of that other treasure which men divide by vulgar fractions and call property. And yet what is it that is consolatory in that inanimate mass obedient to blind laws of development? What in this *can* be consolation to a creature endowed with volition and intelligence? Neither an atom nor any aggregate of atoms, however charmingly arranged, can thus strongly move sympathy, and the beauty itself, being a quality and not an essence, is equally incompetent; it is somewhat of which these are but the external indices—it is that which underlies and overreaches the whole: it is God,

who, through Nature, operates beneficently—God, who has so finely adapted the objective to the subjective world, that, by Nature, there is unison between them ; that the dead material world is vivified, and made to ‘weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice’ ; that neither shine nor shade can fall upon the soul of man without having its outward counterpart. It is true that Deity has made a still loftier revelation of Himself, and has more richly evinced to us His all-goodness ; but that in no degree affects the fact that God is the secret of Nature, and that even the theoretic atheist, when surrendering to the influence of natural beauty, lies in the arms of the very God he has denied !

“ To show you some of the strong impressions made on me long ago by Nature, I enclose a little poem. It is youthful, and perhaps a little mystic, but I do not despair of your finding meaning in it.

“ I hope the Yorkshire Grasenbury is strengthening you, but whatever it does, let it not ‘ throw cold water ’ on your affection for

J. M.

“ NATURE.

O Nature ! earnest eyes may see
 Beyond thy spanning blue ;
 Sometimes the lealest love of thee
 Forgets thy flowers and dew.
 For deeper love thy graces speak
 Than this of sight and sound—
 Beauty possessed but bids us seek
 A Beauty never found.

Truth is thy spirit—moveless truth
 Self-cherished and sublime,
 Mocking with its eternal youth
 The winds and clouds of time.
 And Science works with coil and care
 To pierce thine outward seeming,
 Down to the subtle centre where
 The mystic fire is gleaming.

But straight within the Poet goes,
 By God's own finger pointed,
 And all thy templed splendour
 Upon his eyes anointed.
 All minstrels old with power endued
 To find that shadowy portal,
 Learned in the same grand solitude,
 To be and feel immortal.

Art is thy daughter, nor can bear
 To dwell with any other,
 And filially she loves to wear
 The moods of her sweet mother.
 And Fancy steals from thee the hue
 Which paints each new delight;
 She but swells forth thy vaulted blue
 To make an Infinite.

Have mortals worshipped or blasphemed
 As, kneeling on thy sod
 And glancing up, thy heaven they deemed
 God, or the Veil of God,
 And starry light His effluent sheen,
 Half clouding at its birth
 A ray too brightly, darkly keen,
 For dwellers of the earth?

When the night's hush to music breaks
 Beneath the dawn's white glances,
 When one quick lyric thrill awakes
 The flowers from dewy trances,
 Then o'er the cloudland's golden rim
 Come chording with thine own
 A lay of burning Seraphim
 Throne-sphered about the Throne!

O Nature! thou hast half revealed
 The Infinite Ideal,
 And if a creed there be, congealed
 Within the *seen* and *real*,

Thy thunder smites that creed forlorn
With all its frail pretences—
Thy lightning is a shaft of scorn
For slaves of five dull senses!"

1840.

[AN AUTUMN JEREMIAD.]

" ASHTON, October '47.

" DEAR BELLE,—I have been rambling in the dusk through the fields, and have been visited with some of those strange vaguely-sad sensations which always come upon me in autumn, feelings which, with all their sadness, I should be loth to lose, though I know that a physically strong organisation would know nothing of them. The air was clear, cold, and breezy; the leaves on some trees are yellow without being sufficiently decayed to detach themselves from the boughs, but here and there came down a leaf, twisting and twirling in mad gyrations before the wind, as if the subtle element which is the symbol of the immortal essence (*spiritus*, the wind) made a mere mock of death and death's victims. Others of the trees were stript to winter nakedness, and their infinitude of little twigs were clearly, keenly defined between the eye and the blue of heaven. There is beauty in this season as in all others, but it is a beauty which brings no joy to me. In reference to Nature itself there is a negative feeling, a want, a lingering, backward look upon that fair and generous mantle which is now torn and scattered and huddled away to rot into compost; and it is not always that the imagination and other faculties are in such slick working order that the *anticipation* of that spring, for which all this dismantling is a necessary preparation, can console and enliven us. So in relation to the inner world, to me such scenes have a strong suggestive force of a premature autumn of life felt or feared within myself. . . . Another dark feature in the autumnal landscape of our present is the sad state of our country. There is to be a total cessation of labour for two or more winter months, with

the fearful concomitants of starvation, disease, and demoralisation. The movement for County Education, from which I had hoped so much, must remain in abeyance till it can be held under happier auspices. And, in the meantime, the millions of the lower orders grow more wretched and depraved in their ignorance; and amongst those who might be reckoned the 'salt of the earth' there is too little energy and self-sacrifice for the exigencies of the time. 'We are selfish men.' I feel at least how miserably true that is of myself. But I suppose one of my first requirements is a little more faith. I will not excuse myself for having poured this pitiful Jeremiad before you. . . . Besides, I know that your own brighter spirit will supply the 'lights' so needful to relieve my superabundant 'shadows.'

"Adieu for a little while, and then for the refreshment of soul which I am so sorely needing. I am run down like a clock, and you alone possess the key which can wind me up."

"October '47.

"I send this petty little notelet that you may not be quite without a scratch to look at to-morrow morning, but as to a letter, that must be written after I get this musical review of 'Elijah' off my hands. Last night I was fairly entranced. It was the acme, pinnacle, grand climax, perfection, *ne plus ultra*, &c. &c., of all music. But you will see in the paper a poor expression of my impressions, &c. Afterwards we went—I, Ireland, Espinasse, and J. Westland Marston—up to the Peacocks', and had coffee and a great palaver about music and Shakespeare, Miss P. and Miss Liebe joining in; after that Espinasse and I went with Ireland to his rooms, and Espinasse read us a letter from Mrs. Carlyle, who is a clever, rather sardonic, and, I fear, a very unhappy woman."

"ASHTON, January 1, 1848.

"I must feloniously appropriate two minutes to thank you for and reciprocate your New-Year greetings.

"I wish I could say something good on the occasion, but

truth to tell, there seems this morning to be the breadth of two or three infinities between myself and enthusiasm or wit. I was yesterday seventeen hours at incessant work, taking my meals at the desk, and reaching home at three o'clock this morning. I do not, however, complain of this in the least degree ; it is good occasionally to tax, to test our powers.

" My head and hands are full of work, as, the balance over, I have petitions to prepare on account of the Lancashire Public School Association, a series of spring meetings to organise for our Mechanics' Institute, a big book to review, &c. &c., *ad infinitum*. I go to-morrow evening to engage speakers for a great public meeting to be held here in the Town Hall. We shall carry on a spirited local movement, and I shall devote to this great and good cause all the available energies that may be vouchsafed to me.

" I yet hope to see in this country an intelligent and thoughtful population, in spite of bigotry, indifference, and self-interest. I am glad to know that all your sympathies are in the right direction, and, like the women of chivalric ages, you will receive your knight with a brighter glance if you know he has played his part in the intellectual tilt and tourney."

" February 1, 1848.

" The education meeting¹ last night was earnest even to storminess. We had that subtle J. R. Stephens to oppose us, and he chased the people into a mad foamy ocean which you would have no notion of from the mitigated notice I am just preparing for the *Guardian*. However, we had the best of it in the end. Deadly battle will have to be waged for our scheme in this town, as some of our wise men of Gotham have got a notion that it is analogous to the Poor Law ! Stephens had more than his match in Mr. John Watts, who supped and slept with me.

" No, no ! There is something which as yet we see not, but which shall some day justify our hungering, obstinate hopes. The very fact that we cannot luxuriously dangle from a twig, and dally with the wanton breezes ; that sun and dew

¹ See page 106.

and all their products of fruit and flower leave ravenous appetites in the nature unappeased, and which nothing here can satisfy, complete the inference that this is not the sphere for man's development into a complete and unique existence. A large segment out of the circle of his existence is to be found elsewhere. What news, then, of that elsewhere? You know what beautiful feet there be 'upon the mountains.' Would that a tranquillising faith were either spontaneous, or the result of some *perceptible* plan of labour! For the rest I refer you to 'Festus,' which, more than any book in the range of literature, represents the veritable lights and shadows of my inner experience. . . .

"P.S.—How is it that a man's 'can do' is so much greater on some occasions than on others? Is a man's power *wholly* from within? Last night I behaved admirably at our annual concert—like a genial man who had never known bile or disappointment. I was here, there, amongst the audience, or in the orchestra, and occasionally (behind the scenes) piping out in support of a brilliant chorus or accompanying a singer on the pianoforte, to say nothing of explanatory speeches to the people—a task which generally devolves upon me in connection with gatherings like this—finishing up, I hear you say, with a grand trumpet solo of my own! There is a continuation of the article on 'Protestantism' in *Tait* for this month. I will send it on to you.

J. M."

[*To BEN RHYDDING.*]

"February 8, 1848.

"To-morrow I look for the Ben Rhydding missive.

"Your brother John and I talked last night on subjects of interest till one o'clock. Your father had told him what was going on about our marriage in July, and asked him something about my religious impressions. Evidently some kind friend has again been trying to poison his mind against me on that head. It will be somewhat irksome to submit to the catechetical process, but your father has a perfect right to seek the

best guarantees for his daughter's happiness. I will endeavour to satisfy him, if possible, consistently with honesty. . . . He complained heavily of your devoting so much attention to books and German studies. I am myself beginning to think that such matters must be postponed till—till we can pursue them together. For the next six months I will send you no more books, and, if it is in you, try to keep your mind perfectly free, save from thought of, and practical preparation for, our own home.

"Your good mother's espousal of my cause, in desiring our marriage this summer, has quite won my heart. God bless her, is the prayer of the poor reputed Pantheist! You say Macleod says you are not strong enough for a plunge-bath—yet, what a plunge-bath you are about to take! Do you shiver on the brink? Be not afraid.

J. M."

"ROCHDALE, *March 3, 1848.*

"This has been a busy day. I walked to Oldham, and reached here in time to go to Greenbank and take tea with Dr. Macleod. Had a red-hot discussion with the whole table anent 'the priesthood.' Came down to South Street; your father came in, and we had an hour's talk together. The time, July, we may take for granted; both father and mother were in excellent humour. Your father made a kind of half apology to me for the inquisition he was making. We did not go into particulars, but he placed in my hands the 'Life of Adam Clarke,' in which there is a form of creed, upon which he would like me to give him a written opinion. I told him I would do my best, but with some parts I might differ, and some not understand. . . .

J. M."

"ASHTON, *March 8, 1848.*

"DEAR SYBIL,—Much as I shrink from anything approaching to a 'confession of faith,' I cannot refuse your father's request that I should give him my comments upon the creed contained in Adam Clarke's 'Life,' which he has given to me. I have stated my views briefly and plainly. I have said that I

know little of theology, as such ; that my opinions are to be taken as intellectual, without pretension to very deep spiritual experience ; and that I could not guarantee in myself the same fixedness as marked Adam Clarke, who framed his creed when young, and never saw reason to alter it. I entered a little into the question of the Trinity, contending for a functional in place of a personal Trinity, on the ground that ‘persons’ imply division, and the Infinite is indivisible. Neither ‘function’ nor ‘person’ is mentioned in Scripture. Something I said also about ‘depravity,’ inspiration, &c., and utterly rejected the doctrine of perfection here. I then closed by requesting my letter might be kept private. Perhaps you will think this is a little too cool, but indeed I cannot make beliefs any more than I can make raptures. I trust your father may look leniently upon my involuntary aberration from the straight line of orthodoxy. I have no pardon to ask for these aberrations, but then —I want *his daughter* !

“I wish my Belle could be my proxy
 When question comes of orthodoxy ;
 But even *her* word might be rejected,
 For is she not herself suspected
 Of having had her ‘ifs’ and ‘buts,’
 And venturing out of beaten ruts?
 Out on all fear ! Let come what may,
 ‘Tis mine an honest part to play.
 Eschew all hypocritic leaven,
 And tell the truth and trust in Heaven !

There’s an impromptu burst for you. Adieu !”

“March 9, 1848.

“Yesterday I was summoned to spend an evening with Emerson in Broughton, and a pleasant evening it was. There were only myself, Ireland, Ballantyne, and Emerson. It was his last night in Manchester. To-day he is away to London and France. Espinasse is gone to France as special reporter to the *Examiner*.

"My notice of 'Topffer' was in *Examiner* of Saturday last, 'Festus' on Tuesday (a labour of love). I had a talk with friend Jacob to-day. I am to go and evoke the latent thunder of his new grand pianoforte to-morrow, if I have time. Won't you want to see your friend Esther?"

"March 26, 1848.

"I should like to know exactly what Dr. Macleod said about my mother? Is there any hope of cure? If not, God grant there may be of alleviation! What infinite patience! Her smile often touches me more than her pain. . . .

"I have just been reviewing 'Mainzer on Musical Education,' also Paton's 'Poems,' which I will send to you. What think you of Longfellow's new poem? Strangely enough, I have also just laid my hands on Guizot's 'History of Civilisation,' which contains a complete account of the Pelagian controversy of the fifth century, which, you may know, turned on the very point of free-will and grace which your father and I were discussing lately. The arguments we used were almost identical with those which were used by Pelagius and St. Augustine, 'There is nothing new under the sun!' Only think of the interval and events since these two priests thundered at each other before councils and convocations in Africa and Europe, and then think of our little skirmish with the very same phrases in your quiet parlour in South Street in 1848!

"Amongst other things, I have been squeezing a few more of Schiller's hexameters into English couplets, &c. &c. I am offered a good price for one or two magazine articles, of which I will tell you; the 'nest' is getting lined, and will be duly ready!

J. M."

"April 16, 1848.

"I have given myself a week's holiday from literary work, and feel lazy and lightsome. I sit in the parlour in the arm-chair, my brother James improvising all kinds of inspired madnesses on our old piano, and looking like a seedy young Beethoven, with his long hair and upturned brow. Whilst

listening, I am struck with the startling thought of what an infinitesimally small proportion of the capacities of any of us is being developed in this state of being. How greatly on accidents of position and circumstantial contact does even that small fraction depend ! ”

[The next letter indicates how his whole being was responsive to music; it was to him ever the supreme interpretation of all emotion :—]

[“*ELIJAH.*”]

“April 26, 1848.

“DEAREST SYBIL,—On Monday my brother James and I went to the Oratorio ; the performance was not equal to that you heard of the same work, but the music interested me more than ever. The impression was deepened by the recent death of the composer, and by the remembrance that you sat by my side when last I listened to those inspired strains. Of this latter fact, however, I have said nothing in my newspaper critique.

“I am not so imaginative as you, and yet to me did the good genius of music speak on Monday night from two hundred strings and voices beautiful things of life, destiny, and eternity—not abstract, but personal ; thou, with thy sweet Mignon face, and large spirit, hadst somehow got up there among the makers of Music, and didst seem to mingle with the tide of sound, the harmony of every chord, the rhythm of every melody, and the unity of the whole.

“Into thee, then, will all the discords of my life be resolved, as the most excruciating dissonance lapses into the most delicious chord, and I, with the skilful hand that knows how best to elicit the latent music of thy nature, shall play upon thee a lifelong succession of solemn adagios, brilliant allegros, and tender andantes !

“Will you promise always to keep in tune? . . .

“JOHANN.”

"*May 4, 1848.*

"When you receive this, your brother George will, I expect, be with you once more after his perils by land and sea on his long visit to Russia. You will have killed the fatted calf, and gone forth with pipe and tabor to give him welcome. . . . For your criticism on my critique I thank you; it is admirable in all respects but one, and that is the trivial one that it is quite wrong. Wherefore so, I will expound to you orally.

"As for a house, I have had a talk to-day with Alexander Ireland on the subject. I cannot see my way to one of the houses we liked, except by dint of constant persevering industry in literary work out of bank hours. This would necessarily debar me from enjoying much of your society, and that idea is intolerable. If, then, the alternative be between leisure and a smaller house, or hard labour and isolation with a larger one, what shall be the decision? Till the period of our union I assure you my diligence and economy shall be exemplary; self-denial becomes a luxury with such a motive. I wrote last night a review of Madame Colmache's 'Reminiscences of Prince Talleyrand,' and am requested to fashion a leading article for Saturday. Touching reviews, I do not wonder you find the extracts so much more attractive than the original remarks, not only because I cannot expect to compete with such authors as Richter, but because in reviews I cannot follow 'my own sweet will,' but must observe in some degree a prescribed form. It would not do to carry original remarks beyond a certain prescribed point, because it is expected that one should mainly engage in indicating the nature of the book under hand. . . . I plead 'not guilty' to probing your tender conscience with the paragraph about 'virtuous indignation.' Indeed, I myself am refreshed occasionally with a little staunch hatred, and you have a right to the same privilege, provided that you never hate but always love heartily your hearty lover,

JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—You have forgotten your clogs. My mother laughed as she showed them to me."

"May 20, 1848.

"Have you noticed in to-day's *Examiner* Mr. Espinasse's very pleasant review of Miss Martineau's book on the East? The book itself is a terribly heterodox one; it shocks even Espinasse's moderate amount of reverence for orthodoxy. In fact, Emerson told me 'that it had been refused by Murray on that ground, and that it was destined to work a great revolution in the notions of heretofore religious people.' I sincerely hope not. It is a book, however, which will be notable, and I shall get it as soon as possible, for dissection by you and myself. I shall always presume that your religious beliefs are of such a nature as to afford to meet openly the rationalising and negative spirit of the day; and whatever weight my own judgment and intelligence can give to 'the truth for its own sake,' shall ever be given.

"Tell me truly how you are? Am just reading with great interest a profound book, Dr. Harris's 'Preadamite Earth.'

Good-bye.
J. M."

[A BLITHE MAY LETTER.]

"Sunday evening, May 14, 1848.

". . . It is evening. The whole family except the patient, suffering mother are gone to chapel. Sam has been preaching in the open market-place, and I, sinner that I am, have been ruminating amongst the birds in a copse about a mile from town. How beautiful is the world just now! The little flowers, even the humble ones herein enclosed (earliest hawthorn bloom, daisy, and mayflower), are perfect, and if they are fragile, is not their beauty concentrated into all our Mendelssohn's music and Schiller's poetry, and human affection, and God's love? And the fragrance of a whole parterre of flowers floats about every single word and act prompted by Duty. We should not recognise and enjoy the little charming messages which the outer world sends through the senses to

the soul, if the soul itself were not already a living temple of the very spirit which informs the world with all its beauty. . . .

"My mother wants me to play to her; nothing so soothes when the pain is greatest. I will be with you on your birthday. You were a little cross (or pretended to be) with me last week, so I revenged myself by throwing off and sending this little birthday ditty! Peccavi!"

"TO I. P.

Some lovely puzzle sleeps
Down i' the darkling deeps
Of thine eyes, Isabel.
The April heaven of thy face,
Where quick moods make fleeting chase,
My wit defies, Isabel,
My poor, weak wit defies.

Neither shine nor shade
Hath yet thy soul betrayed
To lover's eyes, Isabel,
Which is truth, and which is fiction
In the charming contradiction—
I'm not so wise, Isabel,
I'm not so weather-wise !

Break, cloud, into a tear,
Let a May sun shine out clear,
And fire the dew, Isabel;
Then Hope shall span the air,
And the violets sweetly swear
'Tis love that's true, Isabel,
Thy love must needs be true."



PART III

BIOGRAPHICAL—*continued*

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE — NANTWICH



CHAPTER I

WE were married on the 26th of July 1848, at the Baillie Street Methodist Church, our dear friend Alexander Ireland being groomsman. As long before settled upon, Lakeland was our honeymoon destination. We crossed from Fleetwood to Peel in a cockle-shell of a steamer; a squall setting in, one paddle-wheel was smashed, and all were thankful to be landed in safety. At Ulverston we found ready, as ordered for us, a strong low double sort of gig, with rumble behind for luggage, and a stout brown horse. Railways, happily, had not then reached the district, and coaches were few; so away we set off on our journey, to drive hither and thither, stopping or speeding, riding or walking, as the fancy took us; he, wild with the delight of at last showing me all the glories of the land he had so long loved, and especially the out-of-the-way nooks discovered in former wanderings. Our adventures were many, sometimes losing our way, having to beg at farmhouse or cottage for shelter from sudden storms and darkness; almost blown over, ascending at dusk in the teeth of the wind, Honiston Pass, but just escaping by dint of

Mr. Mills pulling at the horse's head for a few paces, while I walked behind, ready to quickly scotch the wheel with a stone. And once we were nearly swamped on Derwent Water. But all this only served as foil to the glorious days of sunshine, of mountain ascents, grand views, of sunset hours spent quietly rowing on the lakes, especially at Coniston, which so charmed us that we spent a few days there, twice ascending "The Old Man." In memory thereof we called our eldest son "Edgar Coniston." Reaching Ambleside on the evening of Saturday, July 28, we found to our joy a note to the effect that "Mr Wordsworth would be quite free after three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and be glad to see Mr. Mills and his bride to tea;" this in reply to a letter sent to Rydal a few days before, stating our movements. We walked from Ambleside to Rydal. As we entered the gate, a lady was standing at the door, who seeing us, waited to give us welcome—it was Mrs. Wordsworth. She not only congratulated us, but taking my hand, gave me a kiss. I think she saw how nervous and excited I was. In the sitting-room sat Mr. Wordsworth, who gave us a quiet but kindly greeting. It was terribly hot—too hot for walking. Presently, after we had sat for a few minutes, Wordsworth rose and said to Mr. Mills, "Will you come into the library a while?" and Mrs. Wordsworth sent me upstairs with a young lady who was living with them, but I

either did not know or cannot recollect who she was. We, Mrs. Wordsworth and I, then sat chatting in the sitting-room, she asking me about myself, also showing me many interesting books and pictures in the room. At five o'clock the gentlemen joined us at tea. Of that hour I only recall clearly two things, one that the talk between Mr. Wordsworth and my husband turned upon Klopstock and his "Messiah," in which subject I was the more interested, as I had not long before visited in Altona the grave of Klopstock ; the other, the quiet watchfulness of Mrs. Wordsworth. When her husband got excited, or went off into a sort of monologue, forgetting all about his tea, she quietly and unobserved took up the cup and poured away its contents, refilling it with fresh hot tea, and then saying, "William, had you not better drink your tea before it gets cold ?" He smiled and obeyed, but with no notion that it was other than the first cup poured out. This amused us greatly.

Now, the coolness of the evening made it possible to go out. We first all went along the favourite walk, and sat in the favourite seat. Mrs. Wordsworth asking me if I would like to see the rest of the gardens, we left them ; returning in about half-an-hour by a lower walk, we saw the two gentlemen still pacing about, every few minutes stopping, and Mr. Wordsworth talking vigorously, Mr. Mills listening, as became a young man, deferentially, but every now

and then also speaking earnestly. How I longed to go and hear what it was all about! Presently Mrs. Wordsworth said, "Shall we join them? It is time to be going in." After a few minutes in the house we prepared to leave. Mr. Wordsworth came to the door to say "good-bye," and laying his hand on my head, said, "Bless you, child, and God give you a good and happy life." A precious benediction indeed—a last word. Two years later, in 1850, he died, and rejoined his beloved daughter, Dora, the light of his old age, who had left him three years before that time.

In due time we turned our faces homeward, and September found us settling down to the new life in the "smaller house" chosen. Dunham Terrace was within three minutes' walk from Queen Street, where lived the rest of the family.

Here, instead of the year we expected to stay, the time of our waiting extended to three years; and though perhaps a little impatient to get "a branch to ourselves," we realised later the advantages of the delay. I made a closer acquaintance with my husband's family (every member of which it was a privilege to know) than would have been otherwise possible. Then to him it was a lifelong comfort that, to the last day of her life, he was so near to his mother. Also, in 1850, his eldest brother, the Rev. William Mills (who had by this time attained a high position in the New Con-

nexion Conference, of which he not long after became President), came as Superintendent of the Ashton Circuit. This renewal of intercourse was very welcome; the brothers hugely enjoyed the renewal of the theological bouts of earlier days—John looking up to William with loving respect, yet mischievously delighting in drawing him out in defence of his staunch and somewhat stern orthodoxy; William regarding the much younger brother with an affectionate pride, not unmixed with some anxiety as to where the vagaries of the “family comet” would eventually land him.

Dr. Hodgson, then headmaster of Chorlton High School, loved to come over for an evening chat; Alexander Ireland, of course, at all times, or any time. Now and then Edwin Waugh, Critchley Prince, Mr. Ballantyne the editor of the *Examiner*, Jacob Bright occasionally, Mr. Peacock, Harry Rawson, and John Stores Smith, who, after he, at the age of nineteen, wrote his “Life of Mirabeau,” was known as “Mirabeau Smith.” I find the following interesting note from him:—

J. S. SMITH to J. MILLS.

“MANCHESTER, April 16, 1849.

“MY DEAR MILLS,—Directly after despatching my last note to you I called in at the *Examiner and Times* office, and received your kind invitation per Ballantyne and Ireland, and we agreed to go out in a train at 5 P.M. on Saturday.

Ballantyne was proposing to start at three, and walk out, and I believe the weather is to decide between the two courses. In either case I shall be with you.

"I shall be glad to see Prince, though he is not in the odour of sanctity with me. I spent the afternoon yesterday and took tea with old Bamford at his Blackley Cottage. He is a genuine fellow. He had two flaxen-haired doll-children (neighbours' children) on his knees, and was singing to them a poem of his own—

"For outcasts a pathway the Master hath trod,
Stars are but dust in the footsteps of God."

"We had a nice stroll in a clough hard by, and I returned very much delighted with the country and with him.—Ever yours truly,

J. S. SMITH."

Dr. Hodgson always left some rare bit of humour for us to enjoy the remembrance of till his next visit. He and Mr. Ireland were sitting smoking by the fire, the curtains were drawn, my husband at the piano singing a favourite Scotch song. "You've got a cosy little nest," said Alexander. "That may well be," said the doctor, turning to me, "seeing that it is lined with feathers from your husband's quills!"

One Saturday afternoon the three friends were going for a stretch towards the Greenfield Moors; as we all stood at the gate we watched a pauper's funeral coming slowly along on its way to the cemetery near, the coffin carried by four tottering old men, and followed by one old woman. "How the poor fellows stagger!" said one of us; "they

can hardly get along!" "Ah!" said the doctor, "it's such a *dead weight*; what can you expect!" Then, as if reproaching himself, "Poor thing, poor thing!" he sighed, and as they overtook the mournful procession he contrived in passing, unobserved as he thought, to slip a coin into the poor woman's hand.

Our almost daily visits to Queen Street were to me a source of pleasure and profit, and I soon learnt to love and reverence the old folk. From his father, doubtless, my husband inherited the characteristics of resolute purpose, unswerving integrity, dogged perseverance, and keen insight into character; also, in a marked degree, the strong sense of humour which, playing like a lambent flame over the somewhat rugged features of the old man, lent a joyous buoyancy to the daily home life and conversation. His tender love of, and delight in, all little children was well known, especially amongst those employed in the cotton factories.¹ He had a store of quaint stories to tell me of the younger days of his boys, and was delighted to get a fresh and interested listener; amongst them the following one about his eldest son, the Rev. William, who, when about twenty, was often preaching at the country stations near Ashton, preparatory to being finally received into the ministry. There lived in Ashton a well-known character, "Jim Burton," a zealous class

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 32.

leader and steward. He liked to test the courage of the young ministerial candidates. Jim was rather short, but strong, active, and athletic; William slender, but very tall. One pitch-dark night the young minister was returning home from a country service; as he walked along a lonely lane there leaped over the hedge a dark figure, accompanied by the click of a pistol and a hoarse demand, "Stand and deliver! or you're a dead man!" William somehow managed to get a firm grip of his assailant, and with a thick stick he always carried, belaboured his foe until he cried out, "Stop! stop! it's nobbut me!" "Who's *me*?" (continuing the strokes, though he had at once recognised the natural voice). "Why, thi friend, Jim Burton!" Then William helped him up. Pulling himself together, Jim, after shaking the minister's hand in a crushing grip, said, "Thou'l do! thou'l do! Willem! Come on!" Arm-in-arm they walked home in peace, Jim now and then rubbing his shoulder, bursting out laughing, and interjecting, "Praise the Lord for another good 'un!" From that day the Rev. "Willem" had no stauncher friend and backer-up than Jim Burton!

But from the mother came the sensitive, shrinking, poetic temperament, and especially the intense musical sympathy, respondent to every mood of the great masters. She had, I recollect, large grey eyes,

dark, shaggy eyebrows, a broad forehead, and a face wherein dwelt an expression of mingled power and sweetness, and, alas ! from the time I first knew her, of patient suffering. There she would sit by the fireside, rocking to and fro, the dear face all knotted up with pain. I have seen her as tea-time approached look often at the clock, and then say, "They will be in soon ! Has John come ? Have his tea quite ready for him." Almost before he could hang up his hat he would hear the call, "Come, lad, be quick and get your tea, its all ready, then go and play that sonata of Beethoven, or a 'Lieder,' or 'Comfort ye.'" But it was always the tea, not the mother's pain, that had to wait. As the melody grew, the drawn features would relax, the weary rocking to and fro subside, the tired eyes close, and often the blessed respite of a short sleep would ensue. Sometimes if he asked, "What must I play, mother ?" she would reply, "Play thy own," and the sympathetic improvisation became equally soothing. Once, turning to me, she said with tears in her eyes, "He knows all about it, doesn't he ?"

She died in 1849, about a year after our marriage. Our first child, then a month old, we named "Amy" in memory of her.

A few letters or extracts here given will help to indicate the general course of events during our stay in Ashton. Whilst spending a few days in

Rochdale, I received my first epistle after our marriage :—

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

“ HOME, ASHTON, August 1848.

“ DEAR WIFE,—I suppose while I am writing my little daily word you are watching the great Balloon swim into the heavens. Why cannot the human soul so grandly and calmly rise into its native realm? Because cares and vices and weaknesses hold us down like the ring-bolts and fifty-sixes which tether that huge machine of cord and silk—only that no hand but that of God can free us from our pitiful moorings. I suppose, however, faith and hope have quite as elevating a tendency as carburetted hydrogen gas. Did it ever strike you when you have heard people inveighing against all doubt, to point them to the fact that the clouds lie *between us and Heaven*, and that the aeronaut must penetrate through *them* before he reaches the serene blue beyond? The clouds were put there by the hand of God.

“ A letter arrives from Lucas, desiring to know how soon I can write and read the paper requested. It seems Lord Palmerston has had a hand in this Hungarian dénouement.

“ JOHANN.”

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

“ ASHTON, Sunday afternoon, March 1849.

“ DEAR WIFE,—Not a soul have I to speak to till I go down to rehearse the anniversary music for the choir. I therefore send you a line, as you were wont of old to look out on Monday morning for a message from your lover. I am strong in the hope that you are making good headway in the matter of strength. You have now one of those pleasant and profitable intervals of leisure from the bustle of life which I know you value highly. I can easily suppose that reflection is busy within you; remembrance and anticipation move you strongly, and possibly you may see with more than usual

clearness the deep significances which underlie every present hour.

"Sometimes an incident, or some circumstance favourable to concentration of mind, enables us to see more into the mystery of the mysterious passage of man through a material world, and something of what it really betokens. Good heavens! how unreal and trifling is all that usually engages our attention, and after all how little of the tremendous significance of Being, of intellectual Being, is wrought into those things which we regard as objects of refined pleasure in books, science, and much that goes by the name of religion. What wonderful principle is it that gives to a mind, which a sum in vulgar fractions would stagger, its sublime grasp upon the transcending Fact, the incaused origin of Being, the unseen Dweller beyond the starry spheres?

"My mother weeps 'some few natural tears' as she kisses my hand and my forehead, and conjures me to 'have a care for James;' but when she speaks of her death there is no fear, none of that instinctive look into the dark beyond. She says she 'will be in heaven before long, and will have done with her fiery trials.' I can only weep in secret. She may linger a while yet. I will try to get away to Southport on Tuesday and fetch you home. God bless you and sustain us all!"

"P.S.—Review of 'Festus' is ready for *Examiner*, written *con amore*.

"It may be that after some years 'Festus' may seem to be lost in the crowd of new books, but it is a work that cannot die, and will doubtless sometime again rise to the surface to meet fresh appreciation and welcome."

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"ASHTON, August 29, 1849.

"... In the paper to-day is the series of Kossuth's letters to Benn. They are the letters of a hero, of a genius, of a great man in every sense, and have raised my sympathy with him and his losing cause to an almost painful intensity; and here is also Prince's poetical paraphrase of the 'Prayer of Kossuth,' which

was read in the original prose at the meeting in Manchester by Dr. Vaughan. Lest by chance you should not see the *Examiner* to-day, I post you the paper, but you must take care of it, and bring it home with you, as I wish to preserve Kossuth's letters.

"I hope you are well and happy; if you be, I am so also. Adieu! Dieu vous garde!"

"P.S.—I suppose your father and Margaret and Elihu have been the honoured guests of the French Minister, and are *au courant* with the mysteries of Versailles, St. Cloud, &c. I shall see you on Saturday in Rochdale."

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"August 30, 1849.

"DEAR ISA,—Don't disturb yourself. Finish what you have to do by all means, then you won't have to go back to it. I am getting on well enough, and getting quite used again to the old bachelor feeling of solitude. My old autumn feelings are also strong upon me just now; you know what I mean—a sort of vague deep sadness, not altogether disagreeable; a sympathy with the incipient decay, and the vast silence and aloneness of Nature. These feelings are natural and habitual to me at some seasons; they are the turnings over and moanings of my soul in its dreamy sleep, and I am more nearly awake then.

"Do not build upon seeing the voyagers on Monday or Tuesday.¹ You may rely upon it they will not be too ready to forsake the splendid attractions of Paris, which is showing up all its foolish finery for the pacific foreigners who have prated poor Hungary to her perdition.

"James and I had some rare metaphysical talkings and readings. I have here for you Newman's beautiful book on 'The Soul: her Sorrows and Aspirations'; and Fichte's last translated work, 'The Way to the Blessed Life.' Expect me on Monday.

JOHANN.

"P.S.—Vaughan in to-morrow's paper."

¹ From the Paris Peace Congress.

Mr. Mills' leisure hours were at this time full of varied and active work ; he devoted much time and energy to the work of the Lancashire Public School Association. As organist and choirmaster of the New Connexion Chapel, he took a pride in perfecting the musical part of the service, and much of the literary and musical criticism of the *Examiner and Times* was written by him. In 1850 he received the following valued letter of advice from Dr. Vaughan, to whom he had evidently sent an article for his consideration. It was not, however, until 1862 that he became a frequent contributor :—

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“ MANCHESTER, May 21, 1850.

“ DEAR SIR,—There is a great deal of thought in your paper, but it is in itself of so abstract and recondite a cast, and given for the most part in a style so much like itself, that I should despair of your finding more than a very limited number of readers, unless you can manage to separate and simplify your perception, and subject your style to a similar process of change. Your meaning seems to me nearly always just, and such as could only come to a mind of some severe thought ; but in periodical literature the power to throw the results of such thought into a clear and popular shape is indispensable to getting readers—that is, indispensable to success. If you will turn to the papers on Macaulay—D’Israeli in the *B. J.*—you will see there the combination of the acute and sagacious with the popular, which I mean. It will require some effort on your part to realise this combination ; but, in my judgment, it is quite worth your while to aim at it, and, if needs be, by a strenuous exercise. Ease, alertness, clearness, power—all go

to constitute the successful writer in our periodical literature. If I may take the liberty of saying so, you have in you what no culture could have given you, but what deserves, to my thinking, the best culture you can bestow upon it to secure simplicity, transparency, pith, and force. I began to look at your paper with a view to a few omissions or alterations that might have sufficed to bring it nearer to my purpose, but I have desisted, from having found in similar cases that little can be done in that way that can be satisfactory to either party.

“I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

“R. VAUGHAN.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“ASHTON, September 3, 1850.

“MY DEAR HODGSON,—The friends of the Public School Association here are determined again to put the question through the ordeal of a public meeting, preparatory to the election of delegates to the forthcoming Conference, and they have insisted on my requesting you to come and address them, though I have urged the strong improbability of your acceding.

“Those who heard your address at the little meeting we held in the Council Chamber of the Ashton Town Hall, are convinced that your presence at a public meeting would be an important element of success. I know your strong disinclination to attend these meetings, and have been averse to troubling you in the matter, but could not well escape. The few supporters here have thought it time to ask the people to pronounce on this question. I have myself small hope of the plan being attained, but I feel that such doubts do not absolve one from the duty of effort. May I hope you will join us on Monday evening?—Ever yours faithfully,

“J. MILLS.”

W. B. HODGSON to J. MILLS.

"DOVER STREET, 30th May 1851.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—Alexander Ireland has shown me your letter; I quite agree with what you say. The fact is, it's only a better expression of what I told A. Ireland on Sunday last. With you I think that compromise is impossible, that one or other party must give way. I shall attend the Conference¹ next Wednesday, but I have not joined those who called for it, any more than I have ever looked for any beneficial result in the way of possible amalgamation. Each Association must hold on its separate way, and God defend the right. I am retiring from even my very trifling share in the agitation, and perhaps before I return to this country (if I ever do return) the strife may be nearer a settlement.

"Before I become a wanderer I will not forget to send you the long-promised pipe of peace; as however I shall not leave² till near the end of July, I shall hope surely to see you and Mrs. Mills at least once more.

"I am, yours faithfully,
"W. B. HODGSON."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"ASHTON, 6th June 1851.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—On the educational matter there is little now to be said, but, as Alexander Ireland showed you my letter, I just wish to say that I do not myself stand so rigidly on the Nonconformist ground I mentioned. I meant only to show that so large a proportion of the supporters of the

¹ The Conference was for the consideration of amalgamating the forces of the L.P.S.A. with the National Public Schools Association.

² Early in 1851 Dr. Hodgson left Manchester and went abroad, intending to make a prolonged stay.

P. S. Association *do* stand upon that ground, that while a compromise would effectually destroy the Association, it would do little towards effective and national education, as Dissenters would still maintain the attitude they show at present towards the Ministers and Council, and the result would be a mere accession of pelf and patronage to one or two churches. It would evade and not meet the difficulty. Of what took place at the Conference you know more than I do, but I cannot help feeling that the position of the Seculars is weakened.

"I am, most sincerely yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

In July 1851 Prince Albert had the happiness of seeing the realisation of his cherished scheme of a great united International Exhibition—a commercial enterprise which he hoped would lead to the weaving of bonds of mutual interest and esteem, and so make for Peace on earth and Good-will amongst men.

Mr. Mills, who up to this time had seen very little of London, left me at Blackpool with our two little girls, and went with my father, sister, George Petrie, Elihu Burritt, Clara Lucas Balfour, and other friends for a visit of some ten days to see the Exhibition and London generally.

On July 9 he writes to me:—

"Just arrived, safe in wind and limb. . . . We left Manchester at 8 A.M., arriving in London at 4 P.M. After a good cup of tea I sally out to the post, and to find the rest, who will already be at the windows engaged to see the Queen's procession from Buckingham Palace, through the Strand, to Guildhall.

"I must hasten or I shall be too late, they tell me.

"Adieu."

A. IRELAND to LEIGH HUNT.

"MANCHESTER, July 5, 1851.

"DEAR LEIGH HUNT,—The bearer of this is a very dear friend of mine, a man of sterling worth and unusual intelligence, and he knows your writings well, and has written kind things about you in our paper. He lives in Ashton, a town seven miles from here. His occupation is that of a bank secretary, and he has many hours' leisure every day, which he devotes to intellectual pursuits. He has written verses of great beauty and delicacy, which I will show you some day. He is one of my chief friends in this part of the world, and is an indefatigable worker in our National Public School Association, having given addresses, written articles, &c., on that subject. He only wishes to shake hands with you and chat half-an-hour, a pleasure which I am sure you will grant him. Trusting you and yours are well.

"Your sincere friend,

"A. IRELAND."

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"LONDON, July 16.

"Yesterday I took Alexander's letter and called upon Leigh Hunt, who received me very kindly, giving me, not 'just a handshake and half-an-hour,' but a good cigar and over an hour's most interesting talk, which I will duly report in person to you and Alexander, who must come over for the evening. Kiss Amy and Maggie for me; tell them Papa will soon be home; the sight of the bairns will be one to eclipse St. Paul's or Windsor.

JOHANN."

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"LONDON, July 18, 1851.

"I have just turned into a coffee-house in Holborn to write to my dearest wife, lest she should begin to think I have slipped into the Serpentine, jumped from the Monument, or been run away with by some naughty daughter of a duchess!"

"I hope soon to be with you, and recount at leisure the sights which have dazzled and distracted me into an extraordinary state of mystification. I continually forget the day of the week, the hour of the day, the place where I am, and whether I am awake or dreaming. On Wednesday we took a carriage for the day, our sight-seeing beginning with a patent peggy-tub and ending with St. Paul's; to-day to the Exhibition for a last visit; and I am now on my way to our rooms, where Elihu Burritt is coming for tea. He is in high spirits, imagining, poor fellow, that the reign of peace is at hand! To-night to the House of Commons.

JOHANN.

"P.S.—What of Elihu and Margaret?"¹

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"ASHTON, July 30, 1851.

"DEAR WIFE,—I am glad to hear of the safe arrival in Rochdale of yourself and two precious charges. Do you see your way to a little rest during your stay, and have you determined to subdue your temperament to the point of repose? That is *the* question.

"Last night I was at a very important meeting of the Executive of the Schools Association, dealing with some new and startling propositions, and I shall need to be there again on Tuesday next.

"Alexander will have me go with him on Saturday on a visit to the Schwanns and Kells of Bradford. He tells me the Wesleyan Reform article has greatly pleased the Movement people in Manchester. I shall probably write on Continental politics next week, and give the Wesleyan Conference another broadside the week after.

JOHANN."

¹ Appendix, p. 394.

CHAPTER II

1852 to 1864.—At last the long wished-for attainment of “a branch to himself” became an accomplished fact, and Mr. Mills received orders to enter on the 1st of January 1852 upon the duties of Bank Manager at Nantwich. The house attached to the District Bank not being available at once for our occupation, Mr. Mills took rooms at the old inn, leaving me to wind up affairs and arrange for removal, and it was March before we were once more all together under our own roof. I would like to tell, for the edification and encouragement of young married folk with small incomes, the fact that, at the end of these years, and with the addition of two children, I found twenty pounds sufficed for the payment (including a quarter’s rental) of all our debts. It was with glee, and perhaps some little self-complacency, that I reported the result of the “winding-up.” My husband had from the first laid down one rule with which in theory I of course agreed, but sometimes found difficult to practise: “If we have not the money to pay for a desired thing, we will do without it.” Herein lay the value, to me at least, of that time of discipline in economy

and management. The glamour and charm of the first home of married life, however humble it may have been, always remains. Luxuries were not for us, but we had all things needful. How often had we wondered where our future would be when the change came! But such a complete turn of the kaleidoscope as this never entered our heads; and the new conditions, combinations, and colourings were at first rather bewildering. The plunge from the very heart of Lancashire, with all its vitality and progressive aspirations—from Manchester, the “centre of the modern life of the country” (to use Mr. Gladstone’s description)—into the deadly quiet of the life of an old market town of about 5000 inhabitants, dozing in the heavy atmosphere of old-world customs, class prejudices, and limited outlook, called for a trying, but possibly wholesome, readjustment of our own ideas. If it is good for a man to go out of such a place into the busy world, gaining enlargement of mind and a glimpse of greater human possibilities than he had ever imagined, so also may it be profitable for a man whose life has been spent in the activities of a large busy town to be taken, for a while at least, from the din and bustle of the “madding crowd,” and learn something of the charm, the beauty, and the goodness that, by patient delving, he may find in the narrower sphere of rural life, and in a totally different environment.

Liberals—and more especially Nonconformists—were at that time by a certain class looked at very much askance. “They can’t be anybody particular, you know! Very decent people no doubt, but—they go to chapel!” was said of us on our arrival, when the serious question of “calling” was solemnly discussed amongst the ladies—the “Medes and Persians” of the social life of the little town. It was very amusing to us to hear that the word “banker” weighted the scale in our favour!

My husband was often (perhaps not without cause) preaching prudence to me, to whom reticence upon matters of opinion, political or religious, was not so easy as it was to him.

At the date of our arrival Nantwich was recovering somewhat from the effects of the terrible epidemic of Asiatic cholera that had decimated the place in 1849. Sanitary improvements had been made; the agricultural trade and market, of which Nantwich was the centre for that part of Cheshire, had revived; and the march of progress, sure if slow, had begun. An early result of Mr. Mills’ report after he had been a month or two at the bank, was that he was commissioned to find fresh and more suitable quarters, which would combine, as was usual at that time, both bank and dwelling-house. It so happened that a large old house, described in Mr. Hall’s “Nantwich”¹ as “the fine brick and

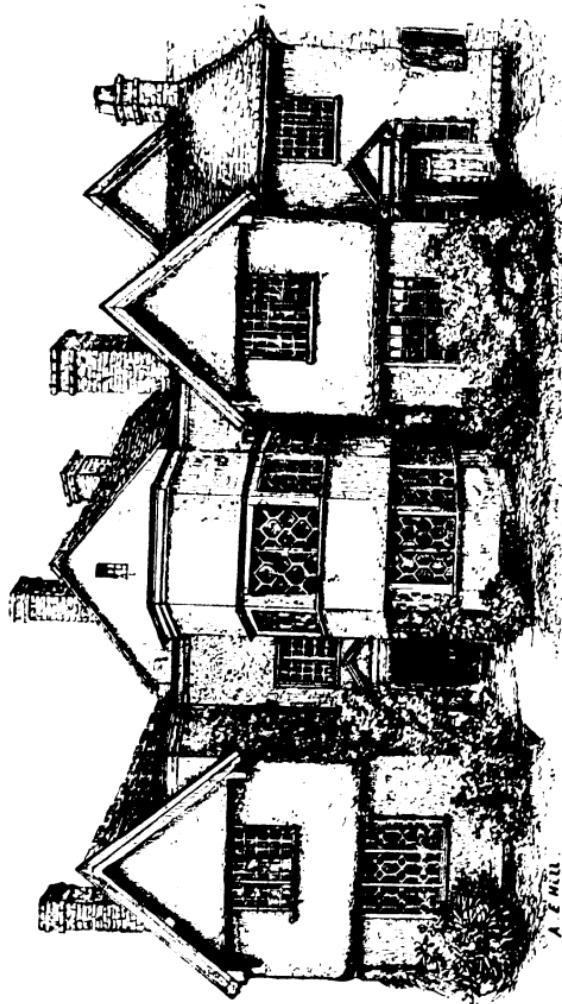
¹ Appendix, p. 394.

stone building, built in 1622, with its lofty and spacious wainscotted rooms, hall, and fine staircase," was to be sold. Mrs. M'Clure, whose husband had recently died, left it, and went with her large family to live at a typical old house called Sweet Briar Hall, in Hospital Street. The property was bought by the bank, and the necessary alterations being completed we went into it in September, and lived there for the next twelve years. We soon found much to interest us in the ancient history and aspect of Nantwich, and the quaint ways of the people. Some extracts from an old bundle of letters, written at that time to my sister Margaret, may serve to give a more living and vivid record of our impressions and experiences than could possibly be gathered from memory alone. These, with some of Mr. Mills' own letters, will require little addition to complete the story of our happy Nantwich life.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"DISTRICT BANK, NANTWICH, February 1852.

"MY DEAR HODGSON,—I thank you heartily for the friendly cordiality of your congratulations on my translation to this place, though the terms in which they are expressed make me fear that our excellent friend Alexander, as is his wont, has thrown too strong a dash of rose into his description of my new position. In what are conventionally called 'circumstances,' I shall certainly improve considerably upon the clerkship to which I was tethered at Ashton; but as regards the rather important 'circumstances' of social relation and spiritual *life outward*, I almost seem to be condemned by the



SWEET BRIAR HALL, NANTWICH.

From Hall's "History of Nantwich."

To face p. 210.

change to virtual death. For in matters like these the words death and dearth are as nearly synonymous as their sounds are similar. As for the 'literary pursuits' and 'useful labours' in which you think I may find resources, I very much fear that my mind is one of those that depend greatly upon friction and stimulus, and those are conditions of action not plentiful in these latitudes. For two months I am even denied the pleasures of my home, as I cannot bring my wife and two children till my predecessor clears out of the house we are to occupy. The people here, so far as I have yet been able to judge, are largely composed of the element *bucolic*, their attention being mainly divided between the Chase, the Church, and the Cheshire Cheese! There is certainly a Mechanics' Institute, numbering about eighty members, to whom the local church clergy give their superfluities of dulness in shape of lectures, and who are occasionally illuminated by such brilliant orbs as Miss Georgiana Bennett (who lectures on 'Progress,' and 'Woman: her Mission,' &c.) and Mr. George Linnæus Banks. Of this institution I shall be expected to become treasurer, and possibly next winter I may dare to aspire to its lecture table! The country round here is said to be beautiful, and in summer no doubt it will be so, but at present I feel only the sense of monotony, caused by its flatness to me, who have lived my whole life within sight of the Yorkshire and Derbyshire hills. My business necessitates a weekly raid into Shropshire, and this will always be a seasonable variation of scene, the road being through a thoroughly English Beulah of farms and farmsteads, parks and mansions. On the whole, you will perhaps think I do not very devoutly respond to the good dealings of Providence, and you are perhaps inclined to remind me that 'the mind is its own place, &c.'; the fact is, I am just now feeling keenly the first sense of isolation, almost of desolation, caused by my transportation to this queer old nook of the world, and as for 'place,' it is not merely that; the mind may be its own place, but it is not, and cannot be, its own stimulus and nourishment. Nothing that memory or imagination can give can reconcile me to the loss of 'familiar faces,' of words, of looks, and kindly ministrations. But of this querulous stuff

jam satis, and more than *satis* if it does not move you to the humane act of occasionally breaking my tedium with a sheet of your continental experiences.

"I feel more regret than wonder to hear of your impaired health in the presence of late events in France, knowing, as I do, how strongly these events must have affected your highly susceptible temperament.

"Your daily gulps of French literature and life, and freedom from all taskwork, must be enriching your mind rapidly, and preparing you for an active and useful future. I know men of considerable powers to whom such an episode in life would be anything but a benefit; but your true nature and clear reason will assimilate and secure the good both of your French and German pasturage, and instinctively reject the gaudy poppies and deadly nightshade! . . . I anticipate with pleasure the time when you will come here and I can give you a drive through the ultra-English scenery of Cheshire.—Yours most faithfully,

JOHN MILLS."

[Dr. Hodgson after leaving Manchester in 1851 spent some two years on the Continent, and was deeply and painfully interested in the *coup d'état*, &c.]

J. MILES to MRS. MILLS.

.. MINE INN, NANTWICH, March 1, 1852.

"DEAR WIFE,—How thankful I shall be when you get here! My work at present is difficult and depressing. One thing I see, that this chaotic condition of affairs once reduced to order I shall be able to do the bank good service. Great tact is needed, one must walk warily; and this brings me to a word of counsel before you come. My, nay our, first outward duty is to the bank. If, chameleon-like, we could just change our coats and become 'Good old Church and Tory,' it might be easier! I see your face at this suggestion! Well, you are, you know, ra-a-ther quick of speech, and have never been under any necessity to restrain or conceal opinion

upon any subject. Let us bear in mind that here, for a time at least, ‘silence is golden’; let us be ‘quiet, and mind our own business’; and, where no sacrifice of principle is involved, aim at adaptation. Before trying to move any inert mass, be sure of your leverage! There’s a motto for you! You understand, and with your help we shall soon find our bearings.

“I will meet you at Crewe.

JOHANN.”

MRS. J. MILLS to MARGARET PETRIE.

“BANK, NANTWICH,
Sunday evening, March 1852.

“DEAR MARGARET,—I know you are all wondering about me, and what I think of the place and the house. I find I shall have such lots to tell you of our new home, and this old town, that I see nothing for it but to send you a family circular letter. Besides, it will serve as a diary, which you know I always like to keep.

“After I left you in Manchester I thought the train, though an express, was a weary long time in reaching Crewe. There Johann met me, and we set off in a drag to drive to Nantwich. It was a glorious day, and we felt glorious too; during the night a slight covering of snow had fallen. The frost was keen, the air clear and bright; all the sky was blue, and all the world shone white and crisp. We passed here and there farmsteads and cottages, and one large red house framed in a mass of elms, their bare white branches thickly dotted with rooks’ nests swaying under the restless movements of their chattering owners. This, John said, was Willaston Hall. Soon we entered the town by the top of Hospital Street. First thing on the left hand I noticed a lovely old many-gabled house, then came small houses, delightfully irregular, some thatched, some red-roofed, then another very pretty house with leaded bay-windows. There are no causeways; the little cobble paving goes right up to the doorstep and under the windows. A turn to the right brought us to High Street; just before us stood a queer old covered Market-place; to the right some ancient-looking

shops, with an inscription over them ; then the 'Crown Inn,' and a few doors farther we pulled up at the bank, the door and windows of which I saw, but—where was the house, and our front door? The house, as I have already noticed many do here, lies a long way back from the very narrow street frontage. Passing under an archway into a widish



OLD MARKET HALL, NANTWICH.
(*Built after fire in reign of Queen Elizabeth.*)

entry I found on the left hand a rather handsome front door, with iron brackets at the side for lamps ; farther on, of course, led to the back door, stable, and garden. Mother, I expect, will fancy it's just like some of those narrow entries we have at Rochdale, in the centre of long rows of cottages leading into miserable courts beyond.

"Impatient till I had seen all, we went through the house. Oh! what a dim wilderness it seemed to me! My heart sank within me as we went through the narrow passages, so uneven (with age, I suppose) that it was like walking on little waves. . . . Plenty of rooms, the dining-room window looking on to the garden, which, like the house, is long and narrow.

"'Well!' said Johann, when we had completed our tour; 'Well?'

"Down I sat upon a packing-case, and exclaimed, 'How on earth am I ever to make this place look cosy or home-like! . . . However, we must make the best of it!'

"I thought he did not look very sympathetic; he had a queer twinkle (you know it of old) on his face. I believe I felt rather cross—I had been in such high spirits on the drive, and the reaction was rather trying. Seeing this he said, 'Cheer up! Can you make it do for a few months—not more?'

"'Why, what do you mean?'

"'I mean that I bought this morning for the bank beautiful new premises, which will soon be ready; I would not tell you till it was quite settled! I'll take you to see them to-morrow.'

"Up my courage bounced: I felt ready for anything! and away we went to the quaint old inn for tea and a night's rest.

"To-morrow came, and I have been to the house. It is a grand old place, and such a garden! I danced about the rooms, and John, bless him! chuckled with delight in showing me every nook and corner inside and outside.

"Kiss the children for me. It is good of you to have them for so long, but I know how absurdly happy you are when you have wee bairns about you. I expect you will make it an excuse to invite all the other grandchildren and as many more as you can get to show them off to! I think mother and father will be glad of a little return to peace when I fetch them home.

"Oh, last night I heard the stentorian voice of a watchman crying 'Twelve o'clock, a very fine night!' It did so remind me of old Aaron and his weather-box near our

gate at home. I thought they were all done away with now; on inquiry next day I was told he was the only one left, and would be the last.¹

ISABELLA.

"P.S.—We are not yet quite out of the world, for at the end of Mill Street, a few hundred yards farther than our iron gates, we came upon, of all things in the world, a cotton-mill! the doors opening on to the wide bridge spanning the river Weaver and the Weir. But a minute's turn to the left, past the mill, brought us into the field path by the river, from which we looked across to our lawn, and also on to other beautiful old gardens, fringed with big, weeping-willows overhanging the stream; on the other hand stretched fields and rustic stiles leading to shady lanes, now gay with wild roses.

"The cotton-mill seemed to us at first an anomaly; but, after all, it is not as the cotton-mills we wot of; *our* mill is classic, dark with age, rather straggling, and not very high, and somehow gives you the impression of 'belonging.' It has a long pedigree. We are told that it dates from about 1300, when it was a corn-mill belonging to the manor, then to the Egerton family, but that it was sold for a cotton-mill about seventy years ago. Mr. Harlock says that in the Civil War it was used for prisoners and sick or wounded soldiers.² So please to think of our cotton-mill with the respect due to a real old aristocrat! Good-bye."

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

"One day my husband came in, looking very much amused, and told me to expect next week a call from an eccentric maiden lady, who had just been to interview him. Her errand was to ask 'If, as new manager, he would allow her the privilege granted by his predecessor?' This was not, as he expected, a loan or advance, but that when she had to call on business, either to bring or fetch money, she might come down the passage³ to our door, and so be shown that way into the

¹ Appendix, p. 395.

² Ibid., p. 395.

³ I soon found that there were no "entries" in Nantwich. They are all "passages." Your "passage," or "two doors past Mrs. So-and-so's passage," is the way they put it.

bank parlour. ‘ You see,’ she explained, ‘ this is a little town ; everybody knows everybody, and knows their business too ; the bank is so exposed, and people can see whoever goes in, and then the shopkeepers are at their doors, and look to see where one goes to spend one’s money ! But that’s not all ; I am so afraid of being robbed, either on my way home or at the house ; there are always idle men standing about.’

“ I suppose, he said, she saw I looked puzzled, for she went on—

“ ‘ Now if, when I have to draw money, I can come to your private door, and sometimes call on your wife, *they’ll* never know, and I have plenty of ways of hiding money ! ’ Whereat, turning up her dress, she showed, as usually worn, a capacious under-pocket, but the real pocket was on the left side, cunningly made in the dress skirt.

“ A few days later Miss ---- duly called, and was shown into my sitting-room. Somehow I expected to see a little, timid-looking person, instead of which there stood before me a tall woman, of rather determined martial aspect, with an aquiline nose, and brow shaded with little black curls. She wore a voluminous brown brocade dress, relieved by a black satin bag, embroidered with red roses and forget-me-nots, out of which peeped the corner of a dainty pocket-handkerchief. A short black watered cape, a large white net collar, edged with five or six rows of narrow goffered lace, very tight brown gloves, and a square-crowned Tuscan bonnet, with spoon-shaped front ; from the edge of this hung a frill of black lace shading the pink roses underneath, large black satin bows, and a brown feather completed what was evidently a visiting toilette. She carried also a sturdy umbrella, with a silver knob handle.

“ My first thought was, ‘ Well, I fancy the thief might get the worst of it in an encounter ! ’ my next, a sofa and ‘ a glass of wine.’

“ ‘ Dear madam,’ she began, ‘ do—do excuse me ! I feel all of a flutter, but no doubt your husband has explained—thank you,’ sipping the wine, and fanning herself with the dainty handkerchief—‘ I’m such a timid creature—such a bundle of nerves.’

“ This, and much more, in the tiniest, squeaky whisper of a

voice, together with the contrast between her physical aspect and her languid sentimentalities, affected or real, and the odd mixture shown even in her dress, was comical and mystifying. I did my best, and when she felt better, showed her downstairs, my husband meeting her at the door of the bank parlour.

"Once, when I was just going out, I saw Miss —— tripping heavily along, card-case as usual carried ostentatiously in hand.

"‘Oh, please, could you just turn back with me, or I can’t go in ; they’ll (this mystical ‘they’) know I could not leave my card as I have met you, and I must leave some money in the bank.’

"I invited her into my room, the third and last time she really ever came in to see me. Usually, when the maid opened the door, she would ask, ‘Is your mistress in?’ ‘Yes’m.’ ‘Oh, well, I will just speak to Mr. Mills first.’ This time, grateful perhaps for my turning back with her, she waxed friendly and confidential, and said, ‘Now I’ll show you something, but you must never, never tell any one—guess where my money is?’ I guessed in vain ; then to my amazement, she took off her bonnet (ah, what a fine ‘Toppin’ was revealed, fastened on with narrow velvet ribbons !) dived into the double lining of the crown, and drew out a roll of bank-notes and sundry cheques.

"‘There !’ she cried ; ‘isn’t that clever ! I just hang my bonnet up in the lobby, no one would ever dream of finding anything there—would they ?’

"After the new bank was opened, in a more private situation, her calls upon me ceased. When one of the Directors rather demurred to the situation of the new place, Mr. Mills informed them that many customers consisted of ladies—widows and spinsters—and they were delighted with the idea that they could go to their bank quietly without all the town noticing them. He gave them Miss —— as an instance, which greatly amused as well as satisfied them."

[To face p. 219.]

OLD BANK, NANTWICH, 1622.



Mrs. J. Mills to Miss L. Stephens.

" DISTRICT BANK,
NANTWICH, June 2, 1853.

" MY DEAR LAURA,—We are looking forward gladly to your promised visit as soon as you can manage to leave all the good work you and Mrs. Blackett have in hand for the poor Irish people. . . . When you come you will enter the town driving from Crewe, and in due time find yourself at the top of Mill Street, a short street leading to the mill and river. Opposite the cottages on the right you will suddenly come upon large open iron gates, and drive round the oval grass plot which has in the centre an ancient hawthorn, just now smothered in bloom, and each side of the drive leading to the ample pillared porch is bright and golden with a wealth of drooping laburnums. This entrance and the front doors are now devoted to the bank, which is cut off from the house by a division that has been built across the hall; your luggage shall go in that way, but you shall go with me through a narrow iron gate on the right; this takes us round to the garden entrance. A glass and oak double door, topped by a queer cottage-bonnet kind of hood, opens direct into the hall, which, despite the big vestibule taken off, is still wide and long enough to turn a carriage and horse in. The floor is of small square flags, the fireplace large, and the walls wainscotted in panels. To the left is the dining-room, looking westward on to the lawn and river, also wainscotted from floor to ceiling. The big staircase of oak, nearly black with age, will delight your heart. The drawing-room is at the top of the staircase, and also has the west outlook. Our great bedroom over the hall felt quite eerie at first, but now we delight in its roomy airiness and warm south aspect. The second and top floor is most interesting, and rather awesome to the children, who can get out at a window and run on the leads all round the top of the house, well inside the walls, the stone ornamental copings of which look very imposing from the outside.

" After all, the garden is the crowning joy here. From the

Despite Mr. Mills' moan as to lack of "friction and stimulus," Dr. Hodgson's prophecy that he would find ample leisure for study, and also for writing, proved true. The long evenings, free for quiet country walks in summer, and study in his cosy little library in the winter time, were made good use of, and writing of various kinds still went vigorously on. It is curious to note here the kind of triangle of subjects on which he was asked to write, and the confidence shown, though he was still only thirty years of age, in his thoroughness and skill of expression. If any special or new music was to be performed, he had to go and criticise. In literature, again, both as to new poetry, such as "Festus," or German works, he was in request, and the following letter from Mr. Hugh Mason will show the opinion held as to his knowledge, even then, of commercial economics:—

HUGH MASON to J. MILLS.

"ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, March 16, 1853.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—You will recollect the Chamber of Commerce sending Charles Mackay, author of 'The Western World,' to India two years since as a special commissioner to get information as to the growth of cotton, and you will remember how he was cut off suddenly in the midst of his labours.

"Mr. Bazley has got possession of Mackay's papers, and I have been asked to endeavour to find some suitable man to edit the publication of them. My mind at once reverted to you, and I now beg to inquire if you would allow me to name

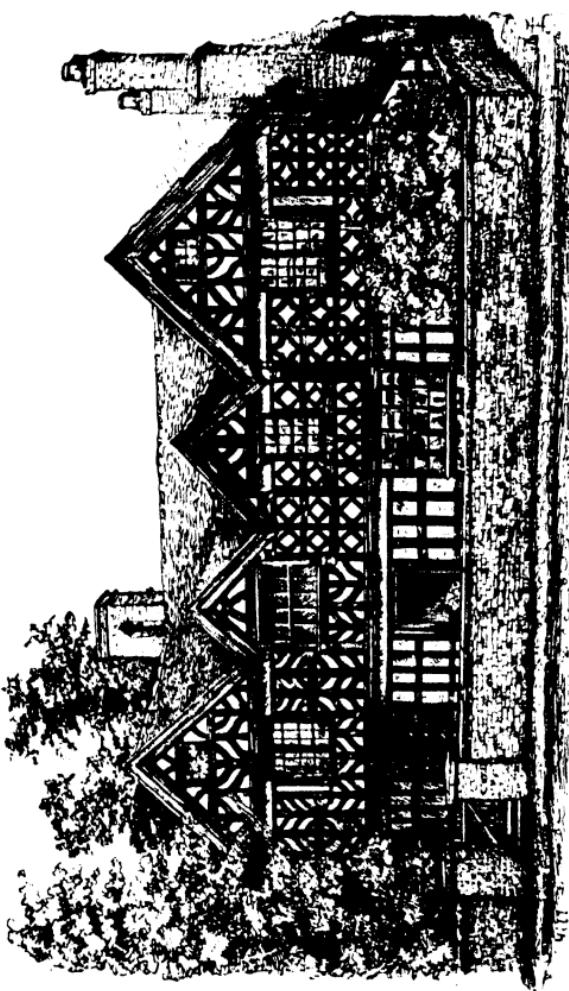
you to Mr. Bazley? I am the more anxious to secure your services because I think you would undertake the duty *con amore*. I am not empowered to make any engagement, nor am I able to state the amount of remuneration that would be paid. I know you to be fully competent, or I would not have made the inquiry. The information collected by Mackay has special reference I believe to the proposed renewal of the company's charter, in which Bright takes so deep an interest. I shall be very glad if you will put me in a position to bring your answer before Bazley. Will you think over the matter, and write me frankly? . . . —Very sincerely,

“ HUGH MASON.”

CHAPTER III

JUST lately a friend in telling me of her visit to Shrewbridge Hall (now turned into a kind of hydro-pathic hôtel for brine baths) said, "We found Nantwich, where you used to live, a most interesting place." If so now, despite modernising influences, how much more so when we took up our abode there, nearly fifty years ago! One could not walk in any direction without coming upon ancient landmarks and bits of broken mosaic of past and stirring historic days.

In the long, high wall that shut in the back portion of our grounds a door opened into Barker Street, and there, almost opposite, we found a chapel where John Wesley preached in 1779. Also Milton's widow (*née* Elizabeth Minshull) attended the service there, and it is said was buried there. Pillory Street was close by, and here was the Friends' Meeting-House, built about four hundred years ago. A short walk to the right brought us to Shrewbridge Hall and estate, with its thick, dark rookeries, the delight of the children in the busy building season. Turning back towards the town, we soon came to the junction of the High Town



CHURCHES MANSIONS, NANTWICH, 1577.

From Hall's "History of Nantwich."

[To face p. 225.]

and Hospital Street, the latter on the right, leading to Willaston and Crewe—High Street on the left to the bridge and Welsh Row, and so on past Dorfold Hall to the pretty village and church of Acton. On the left of Hospital, or “Hospel,” Street stood Sweet Briar Hall, one of the few old houses spared by the great fire of 1583, and at the top the beautiful well-preserved Churches Mansions, built in 1577. To the left in the High Town were curious gabled shops, with an inscription over them in large letters as follows :—

GOD GRANTE OVR RYAL QVEEN
IN ENGLAND LONGE TO RAIGN
FOR SHE HATH PVT HER HELPING
HAND TO BILD THIS TOWNE AGAIN

THOMAS CLEESE MADE THIS WORKE
THE YEARE OF OVRE LORDE
GOD, 1584.

To the right was the old Market Hall. Here I used to go to market, taking maid and basket with me, buying delicious fresh butter at 10d. per lb., a plump chicken for 1s. 4d., and sometimes even less—“Good old times” those! The fresh, rosy faces of the country girls and women, and their hearty greetings, added to the pleasure of marketing. One had to get used, though, to their manner of speech, as : “This chicken is nicer *till* that ;” “I’ll fetch another—wait *than* I come,” &c. I soon

noticed that on market-day and Saturday, it was the gentlemen who were buying at the butcher's stalls. I laughingly described them to my husband, but before long one of them suddenly asked me, with a smile, "Mrs. Mills, where's your husband?" "Where? At the Bank, minding his business. Where else should he be?" "Does he never buy the meat?" "Bless you, Mr.—, he would hardly know a sirloin from a leg of mutton, or a loin from a steak-piece, till it came on the table—and I am not sure always then!—But where's *your* wife?" We both laughed, and went on with our marketing. I soon found I must be a very early bird, to get the choice bits before my lords came sauntering in, looking very spruce, and at leisure, with, as I said to one of them, "a good budget of gossip to dispose of."

A little beyond the Market Hall, on the opposite side, stood the "Crown Inn," also rebuilt by the help of Queen Elizabeth. Its quaint gallery and Assembly Room have been put to strange and varied uses in their time; once service had to be held there, because the church was filled with hundreds of Royalist prisoners after a great fight. Soon we came to the bridge over the Weaver, and on to Welsh Row, a wide, airy street, with an open stream rushing down one side of it, here and there covered with flags for the purpose of crossing to the houses. My children remind me how they used to go out

for their walk, laden with paper boats to drop into the channel, and then fly in chase to catch them as they emerged from under the flags. Beautiful old houses, all with histories of their own, stood on either side of Welsh Row. One, a type of many, from the roadside looked rather dark and gloomy, but directly the door opened you looked across the roomy entrance-hall (with staircase on one side), and through glass doors, on to a delightful old garden, such as abounded here, and at once you were in the country, out of the gloomy front into the sunshiny side of the houses.

On the left, standing back from the road, with fine iron entrance gates, was Townshend House, where King James I. stayed with his Court in 1617, the guest of Mr. Wilbraham. After all, the greatest interest to us was in the occurrences of the Civil War of 1643. It seemed impossible to imagine this quiet, sleepy place to have been the scene of such exciting and important conflicts; that it was a garrison town, fortified with mud walls;¹ or that Fairfax marched with 3000 men to raise the siege, the sturdy Puritans holding it against repeated Royalist attacks. I am glad Nantwich was loyal to principle, and the great stand for Parliamentary liberty. In Pillory Street were slain many of the king's men, who were trying to force the town. Once the first Lord Byron came with an army

¹ Appendix, p. 396.

from Chester, taking Beeston, and Hawarden, and Crewe Hall, but attacking Nantwich in vain, and the siege was raised.

Most of our information I got from old Richard Horton and his wife. They were Methodists, and he was a shoe manufacturer. Often I went to sit with the old lady, and when we fell to talking, her husband would pour out all manner of anecdotes and traditions of the days of the Commonwealth. And whenever we noticed or became curious as to any house or place, Mr. Mills would say, "Go and ask old Mr. Horton." He had recently laid claim to the Shrewbridge estate, as a descendant of an earlier owner, but was defeated in the suit. It was in talking to him about Nantwich, and the people then living, that we came to see that there existed still a goodly leaven, a saving remnant, of the strong Puritan Nonconformist and Liberal element.¹ Many of these people exulted in their descent from the men who in Nantwich had, as Parliamentarians, fought a good and successful fight. A link of interest was added when we learned that the Lord Byron (Royalist) who attacked Nantwich, was, after the Restoration, created a peer, with the title of Lord of the Manor of Rochdale; and that George Booth (Puritan), who so valiantly defended the town, and refused to surrender, was heir to Lord Egerton, and to Dunham Massey and Warrington.

¹ Appendix, p. 396.

Mr. Mills soon gathered around him a few choice spirits, to whom books, literature, and progress were of at least as great import as the fattening of cows and the price of pigs. A small book-club became enlarged, and the arrival of the monthly box from Mudie's, London, was eagerly looked for by our little reading society. By no one was Mr. Mills more heartily welcomed than by Samuel Harlock, of Stretch & Harlock (both families of old Quaker descent). Mr. Harlock's whole soul was bent upon helping forward the progress of his town, especially educationally, but he fought against long odds. Quiet, resolute, and of strong convictions, he was not gifted in speech ; also being a Nonconformist, he met with much opposition from the rectory, and little sympathy from others. One of his principal supporters was Mr. Philip Barker¹ (Unitarian). The Wythenshawes, good old Wesleyans, and a few Congregationalists, were with him in his untiring efforts to get a town-hall built, with reading-rooms, and so have a central place for meetings ; the church school and the gallery of the "Crown Inn" being all that was available. Mr. Mills threw himself heartily into the work, and got fresh adherents ; Mr. Tollemache of Dorfold began to be interested. Mr. Johnson, of Manchester, a Wesleyan, who had just taken the Cliffe at Wybunbury, came to their help ; and, despite much opposition, direct and indirect,

¹ Appendix, p. 396.

they had the pleasure in 1858 of opening a town-hall, Mr. Mills organising a grand concert, and getting Clara Novello to come down. One of the bank directors was Mr. Gilbert Ramsay, a true and racy Scotchman, who lived with his sister Janet in Monk's Lane, close to the Congregational Chapel, to the interests of which they were devoted. After her brother's death, Miss Ramsay continued her help, and also left ("to please Mr. Mills," she said) a sum of money to be invested in a musical scholarship in the Lancashire Independent College.

Every Friday afternoon was a holiday, and the kind-hearted, hospitable country people and gentlemen farmers of the district, made us always welcome. Mr. James Boote, of Weston Hall, never tired of showing kindness to Mr. Mills—"The pond should be dragged, rabbits shot, fishing arranged for, if he would go for the day." His delight was great when he happened to catch a big fish, but he shirked the rabbit-shooting ; he shot one, saw it jump, and could not get over it. Our frequent visits to Weston Hall gave us a delightful insight into the menage of a gentleman-farmer. I remember, when spending two or three days there, how I went with Mrs. Boote on her daily round, and noted with admiration her quiet powers of management, her ceaseless activity ; and I thought of "the virtuous woman who riseth while it is yet day, who looketh well to the ways of her household"—that household

then consisting of father, mother, three or four sons, and one precious daughter ("Missey"). Nor must the grandmother, old Mrs. Boote, be forgotten; every one, from the stately old lady to the youngest child, was handsome and hearty, and goodly to look at.

There seemed to me to be an army of farm-servants, in addition to the house maidens, all busy as bees in this prosperous hive. I revelled in the sight of the cool dairies, with their rows of creamy bowls; the dash of the churns; the slate slabs on to which a buxom dairymaid noisily slapped the butter, whilst a younger one patted and piled it up. Then did we pry into the secrets of cheese-making, and were shown in the store-room piles of round, ripening cheese waiting for the market.

Next into the farmyard, where the wheeling pigeons came circling round our heads, whilst the clucking hens and waddling ducks and geese rushed to welcome their mistress, to feed out of her hand, or to pick up the crumbs of her largesse. All the time the dogs were barking and pulling at the leash, soon to be freed, and race before us over the fields to where the horses were grazing and the young foals frisking. Mr. Boote was not only renowned for his cheese-making; he reared and sold horses. He was also a judge at the agricultural shows, and for years after we had left Nantwich for Bowdon, we had the pleasure of seeing him when he came over as one of the judges to the Altringham and Bowdon Annual Shows,

sometimes bringing with him his daughter Charlotte ("Missey") to see our girls.

Mrs. Boote was great at catering, and cooking too. A dinner party was no small labour then, for the table groaned under the weight of solid joints, whole hams, poultry, &c., all cut up on the table, with much questioning as to favourite cuts, and attention to different tastes. Then when all was cleared away, the dark polished surface reflected fruit, glass, lamps, and sometimes the elongated faces of the guests. Dinner *à la Russe*, then unknown, would have been scorned as an inhospitable, lazy makeshift. Now this supreme English meal can be got through in half the time, and with half the material, giving scope for conversation, in which even the host can join. It is the age of progress.

Somehow, many of the farmers and gentlemen round came to have great confidence in Mr Mills' judgment, and would ask his counsel upon many matters other than their bank business. Some who were lovers of books were glad to find a sympathetic and helpful friend. The Rev. S. Herrick Macaulay (born at Rotheley, and a cousin of Lord Macaulay), then rector of Hodnet, became very friendly, and then in the summer would have us all to spend the day there at Bishop Heber's old home, he and Mr. Mills exchanging books and discussing them by speech or letter. Mr. Richard Corbett of Adderley Hall, who was blind—a man of great intelligence,

for whom Mr. Mills had a high regard and sympathy—was only too pleased to meet with one so ready and willing to help him. He used to come with his valet on business to the bank, and generally contrived to arrive just at closing time, when he and Mr. Mills could go to the library (which served the double purpose of library and bank parlour), and have a good talk, he taking away for his reading such books as Mr. Mills recommended or procured for him. It was very touching, my husband said, to see his eager face light up as they chatted, and his delight in a new book. He was passionately fond of music, the interview often ending by Mr. Mills bringing him into the dining-room, and singing and playing to him to his heart's content. Sometimes a young man, a son, of about twenty-five, came with him—that was Reginald Corbett, the present owner of Adderley Hall, and Master of the Cheshire Hounds. He writes to me, “I well recollect Mr. John Mills, also the fact of his every Wednesday driving from Nantwich to Market Drayton under the protection of a loaded pistol.”

It was owing to the strong representations of Mr. Mills to Mr. Corbett that the first railway from Market Drayton was made to Nantwich, instead of to Madeley, Shropshire. Those weekly journeys were sometimes rather trying, and not devoid of adventure. They—that is, Mr. Mills, a clerk, and

a groom—armed with a pair of pistols, and the precious box of specie under the seat, left every Wednesday morning for the one day's banking at Drayton. In the dark winter evenings, if they were at all late, there was much anxious listening for the sounds of arrival. In the terrible snow-storm of 1857 they drove in a chaise, fought along till within two miles of Drayton, and then gave it up. Seeing an opening in the drift, and a gate, they turned horse and carriage into a field, unharnessed the horse, took out the heavy box, and two of them carrying or dragging it in turns, and one leading the horse, at last reached the inn, exhausted, but safe. At night, putting the box under the bed, they tried to rest, but kept watch by turns till morning. After transacting the little business needful, they set off with two horses, an extra man, and spades, and reached home by two o'clock the next day.

Living near to Market Drayton was the Rev. F. Silver, rector of Norton-in-Hales, a wealthy man, who devoted all his church income to the welfare of his parish, and who had larger aspirations than he could always carry out. He had built a lecture-room adjoining his beautiful house, which has since been converted into a museum of art treasures and curios, attracting great numbers of people on special occasions. One summer day which we were all spending there, the children, in rambling about the house, came at the head of the staircase upon a

narrow door ; they opened it, and there stood a human skeleton ! They came flying downstairs. His wife told us with great amusement how her husband had announced a " Lecture " upon " The House We Live In," and it was to be given in the large central hall of the rectory, not in the lecture-room. In came " Hodge " and all the young Hodges, the young folks from the farms and shops, quite a large gathering, evidently expectant that they were to hear and see all about the old house, which was full of rare curiosities. But when a curtain was drawn aside there was almost a stampede, with shuddering whispers, an exclamation of horror, and a general slinking away ! A stout farmer's wife marched out, muttering, " It's a shame, it is, to show all them nak'd bones that fashion !" However, he tried again, talked to them when he met them, and in time got them to listen with interest and some understanding. Mr. Mills told him, " You made too sudden a plunge ; you should have shown them the ' nak'd ' bones of a bird or a rabbit to begin with !" Now and then Mr. Mills gave them a little address, or a song or reading.

Another favourite picnic was to drive to Hawkestone, Sir Rowland Hill's place, and visit the hermit there. When " Uriconium " was discovered, we all went off by train to inspect the Roman remains just excavated.

We did little evening visiting ; dinner parties

were few, and mostly in the country houses. Most people dined at noon, and invitations were either to "high tea," or for the evening and supper. All had to walk; cabs were not, the two or three existing vehicles being called "coaches," and charged as carriages if ordered out at all. The ladies came bundled up in long cloaks with hoods, and skirts turned up to the waist; if wet, often in clogs, and there was always a long and elaborate dressing ceremony upstairs. "Clogs," which I recollect wearing in 1847, were not "clog-shoon," but a kind of wooden sole or sandal fastened with straps across the instep, a genteel advance upon the "ring-patten," and the forerunner of goloshes. Those were the days when cake and wine were invariably ready and offered to all callers. I did not like this, but had to "adapt." When we had got to know people pretty well, I bought a dainty chocolate set, and with plenty of thick cream (then only ninepence a quart) offered frothed chocolate as an alternative to the wine. Gradually the chocolate won the day, and the wine was left; some friends also followed suit, to the advantage of all concerned.

It was not always easy to act up to the policy urged of "golden silence," &c. One day, soon after our arrival, being called out to see a man at the door, I asked his errand; he had a book and papers in his hand. "I have called for the rector's Easter dues." "But we don't owe the rector anything;

we——.” I pulled up suddenly, and went to the private bank door. My husband came out. “What is it?” “Oh, there’s a man begging.” “What for?” “For the rector, he says; we don’t owe him anything!” “Send him round into the bank.” “Did you pay that man?” I asked at dinner. “Yes,” and he laughed, “but the bank pays, not we; it’s no affair of ours. But,” asked he, “what did *you* say to him? He looked rather black!” “Oh, nothing much; I was as good as gold, and put the bridle on hard. I *wanted* to tell him we came from a land where Church Rates were not!”

Sometimes incidents would arise, the conduct of which ran very counter to one’s ideas, as in the planning of any public joint effort, social or philanthropic. Once—it was at the time of the Crimean War, and all hearts were saddened by the accounts of the sufferings of our wounded soldiers, and indignant at the blundering lack of proper medical and ambulance help—it was proposed that we should at once set to work scraping lint and making bandages. A note summoned me to a friend’s house, to form a preliminary committee and devise a plan of working. On my return home my husband asked, “Well, what have you done at your meeting?”

“Done! — wasted an afternoon and a week! Why can’t a company of women scrape lint and

roll bandages without all the paraphernalia of aristocratic patronage? It's too absurd! I shall go over to our Quaker friend, Mrs. Harlock, and a few others, and we will set to work here to-morrow. It is too humiliating to have to wait a week when the matter is so urgent!"

"Gently, gently! It's not worth your——"

"Oh, but you must hear me out! You know you said we should, when I felt like this, 'have it out together.'"

"Yes, yes; you are quite right. It is absurd." And what must the provoking man do but walk across to the piano, and strike off the "Battle of Prague" (as he knew, the only music I ever could play, save hymn tunes), finishing up with the "Marseillaise." I stood half-vexed, half-laughing. "Now," said he, "we've had it out. Come along into the fresh air." So it ended with a laugh and a soothing walk round the dear old garden, and when he found I had said not a word of protest I got my "pat on the back," as the reward of discretion.

Nevertheless, the mellowing years and wider field of observation make one feel like crying "peccavi, peccavi!" to the ghosts of those good, simple folk, whose action was the natural outcome of hereditary tradition and habit, void of any self-seeking element. Ah! wherever the "stalk of carle hemp" has withered away, the servile spirit, confined to no class

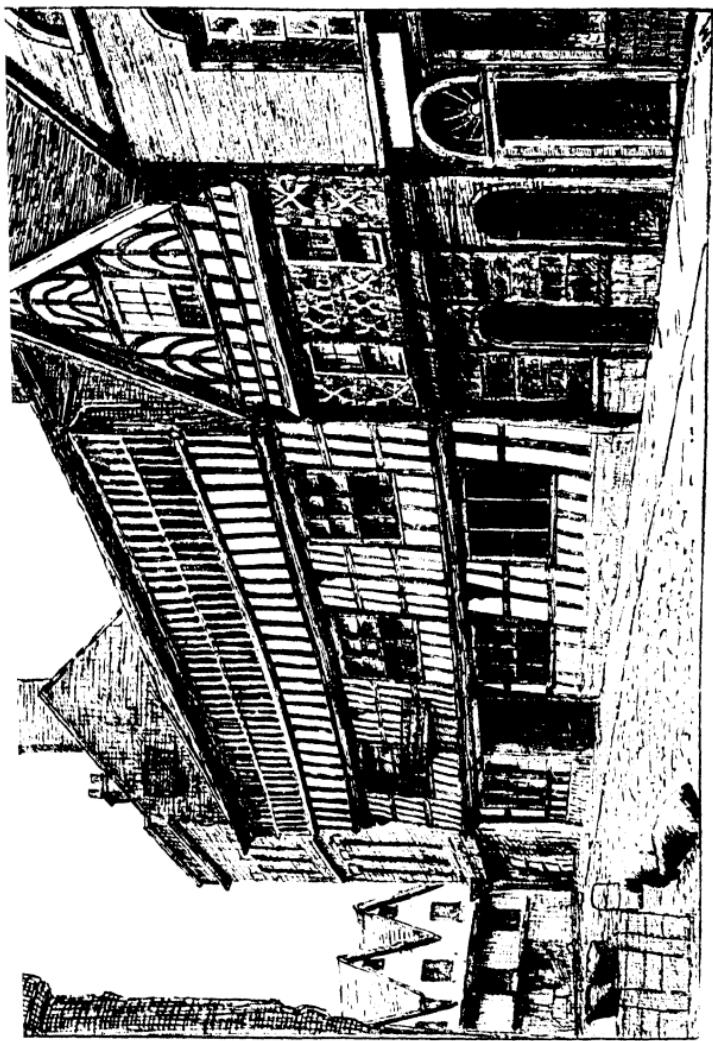
or locality, *will* show itself in the cringing and toadying to mere wealth and show, independently of character —the worship, not of birth and old titles, but of gold; the latter idolatry being more demoralising than the former, a modern canker-worm.

It is well that, in furtherance of any scheme of good work, the support (not patronage) should be sought of men and women of position, wealth, and influence, but, let that wealth have been honourably gained; let the “influence” be the growth of confidence-inspiring character.

The problem as to the education of the children was solved by the adoption of the Kindergarten system, which had recently been introduced into Manchester by Madame Ronge, through whom we found a trained German nursery-governess. It will be remembered in Manchester how thoroughly Miss Barton carried out the system there, establishing a large and prosperous school, whence went forth into schools and private families many enthusiastic, trained teachers, spreading the knowledge of, and creating confidence in, Froebel’s principles. Looked upon at first with suspicion, as being just all play and no teaching, its promoters had uphill work. Now the majority of schools, public or private, have adopted the system for infants, and are carrying the same principles into a higher grade, to the great advantage of all. Happy children, born in Kindergarten days!

When Mr. Curwen put forth the Tonic-sol-fa system of notation, Mr. Mills looked well into it. His great hindrance, in common with all choir leaders, was the almost universal inability to read at sight, everything having to be learned by rote. He soon found a young man willing to learn it, and assist him in training the little choir of the Congregational Church. The results, I think, surprised Mr. Mills himself; before a year was out he had a strong, keenly interested band of singers, who could readily read any anthems, hymn-tunes, or glees put before them. When they came to practise in our roomy old hall, it was a joy to hear and to see them, happy in the acquisition of a new faculty; and good to see their leader's enjoyment also. Of course the children had to learn it as well. The accounts of the great Crystal Palace and other competitions of late years, and the prizes awarded to the Tonic-sol-fa competitors, call up vivid remembrances of those days of small beginnings.

A British and Foreign Bible Society, established, according to Mr. Hall, in 1824, had evidently taken root and flourished, and its annual meetings were very interesting and enjoyable. Here, at least, was mutual ground for the co-operation and meeting of all sects and all parties, and every one seemed to go; people from the country drove in, dressed in their best, combining a visit to friends in town with attendance at the Bible meeting. I distinctly



OLD CROWN INN, NANTWICH.
From Hall's "History of Nantwich."

recollect the first meeting we went to, held in the "Crown Inn," the Marquis of Cholmondeley, as usual, presiding, supported by the Rector, the Dissenting Ministers, and a sprinkling of well-known laymen, such as Samuel Harlock, Gilbert Ramsay, and Mr. Smith of Stapeley, who may be said to have founded the Nantwich Branch, and to whose untiring devotion was owing in great measure its growth and prosperity. The Marchioness sat at one end of the platform, now and then chatting with a gentle condescension, amusing in its very unconsciousness, to the favoured lady who had presented her with a bouquet. A select and solemn conclave decided each year who should have this coveted privilege, which meant sitting next to the Marchioness, answering her questions, and venturing a remark ; and above all, the delight of retailing to her next week's numerous callers what had passed—"As the dear Marchioness remarked to me, &c." The chairman was not merely a Marquis, but a high-bred Christian gentleman, humble as gracious, and enthusiastic as to the welfare of the Bible Society. Next to him sat one who, when he rose to speak, riveted attention, and dwarfed all other speakers—Thomas Bateman, farmer, and Primitive Methodist local preacher, who was born at Wrenbury, but lived from boyhood at Chorley, where his father settled. Of ruddy complexion, keen-eyed, spare, yet broad-shouldered and well knit, he gave an impression of square

power. Swaying at first slightly to and fro, after a certain country fashion, he, without apology or preamble, plunged at once into his subject, and went steadily on, flashes of humour relieving the deep earnestness, to his climax, and then quickly, and unexpectedly, sat down, looking fidgeted only till the applause was over.

When Mr. Bateman happened to be preaching in cottage or “conventicle” near Cholmondeley, he had no more devout hearer than the Marquis, who loved to slip out quietly to his service, and if he could not persuade him to go home with him, would walk along with him to the house of his host, some farmer, whom he had promised to stay with; and not all the marquises or nobilities in the world could tempt Thomas to break his word!

It was a beautiful friendship, free from any element of condescension or patronage on the one side, or servility on the other. Seeing them standing together on that platform, one felt sure those two had often met on equal ground, battling with the Powers of Darkness.

One Sunday morning we went to hear Mr. Bateman preach a special sermon, in aid of the much-needed renovation and decorating of the Wesleyan Chapel in Hospital Street. That is over forty years ago; yet that sermon lives in the memory, especially the strong, mellow voice,

as he gave out the text, "Oh ye that dwell in ceiled houses." Mr. Mills was delighted and surprised, and I have heard him in later years allude appreciatingly to that discourse. When we went to Nantwich, in 1852, Mr. Bateman had then been nearly twenty years on the Board of Guardians there. He was in the prime of life, equally at home in cottage or castle, and as heartily welcomed; yet he lived and worked for over forty years longer—dying in 1897, aged ninety-eight, in full possession of his faculties.

His Life, when it appears, cannot fail to be full of interest, in telling the story of a man who, conjointly with John Wedgwood, Hugh Bourne, and William Clowes, founded the Primitive Methodist Society; who refused liberal offers from his church friends to pay all university expenses if he would take Orders; yet who, considering the income of his parish¹ vicar to be very inadequate, collected over a thousand pounds, and bought a farm, the rental of which to this day goes to augment the incumbent's income; a man who, when he found that a very prosperous business he had formed, in partnership with a friend, was interfering with the religious work to which he had devoted his life, gave it up, and in so doing sacrificed a large fortune—his remaining partner dying worth over half a million.

¹ Chorley.

He was such a delicate, shy, quiet lad, that some people thought him anything but sharp; but an old man, named Capper, used to say to him, "Thou'll be a mon, and open somebody's een, when I'm dead and forgotten!"

To forestall, however, his biographer, would not be fair. I will only recount an anecdote given to me by his son, to whom I am also indebted for information concerning his father's later years:—

"My father was often at Cholmondeley Castle. He was there one day, and having finished his business, his Lordship was called away. Father said, 'I must go now.' The Marchioness said, 'Mr. Bateman, I never saw such a man! You are always busy, and off in a minute, and have no time for prayer or anything!'

"'Oh! your Ladyship, I am busy, but have always time for prayer!'

"'Then,' said she, 'let us have prayer.' And she summoned about a dozen ladies who were staying at the Castle, and they had a time of prayer, in which one or two of the ladies took part.'"

CHAPTER IV

1854.—Just about this time there had commenced a process which was destined to exert new influences and bring fresh, if sometimes unwelcome, blood into the circle of county and country life. Rich men of Manchester and Liverpool, having in the flush of prosperity following the Repeal of the Corn Laws amassed large fortunes, began to dream dreams of social advancement, and to cast longing eyes upon the charming old houses and estates dotted over the country, of which they sought opportunity to take long leases from an impoverished aristocracy who would not sell out their cherished ancestral possessions. This process, now so frequent and common as to be looked upon as the evolution of the natural order of change and progress, then excited much painful comment, and provided material for a fund of gossip everywhere—in house, market, and parlour.

The main object of some of these “interlopers” seemed to be to kick down the ladder up which they had climbed. It was these antics which, seen through by keen and critical eyes, gave rise to

satirical jokes and many, perhaps exaggerated, stories.

But, about 1856, there came to live at the Cliffe, Wybunbury, one who was a revelation, a valuable object-lesson to his neighbours, and to all who knew him. Of fine presence and courtly manners, wealthy, hospitable, and generous, Mr. W. R. Johnson, J.P., of Manchester, at once took a high place in town and country. A Wesleyan and staunch Nonconformist, he had no pretences or reserves as to his religious or political convictions, or to his business; no truckling to any narrow, "classy" notions of church or county folk; and doubtless his open stand on these matters strengthened his influence for good in every direction.

On Sundays he usually drove into Nantwich to the Wesleyan Chapel; sometimes walking over the fields to the Parish Church; but always taking the Communion with "his own people." To his parish he was a benefactor, the right hand, and often inspirer of the vicar in efforts to raise the tone of the village, and enforce sanitary conditions. He left £1000 for the founding of a free village library there. The Wesleyans, of course, were gainers in every way; to Mr. Harlock, and the few who were working with him, Mr. Johnson was a godsend indeed! Mr. Mills and he quickly forgathered, and we sometimes spent a precious Friday afternoon at his ideally beautiful house—



a perfect specimen of the black-and-white timbered mansion. It was at a dinner-party at the Cliffe that Mr. Mills met Monckton-Milnes (soon to be Lord Houghton). Mr. Johnson entertained royally, he gave royally, and was welcomed at houses to which the "*trimming* interloper" could find no *entrée*. It was on his retirement from the firm of A. & S. Henry, that Mr. Johnson rented the Cliffe Estate, belonging to Sir Edward Delves Broughton, and lived there until his death in 1875, aged seventy-five. He was buried in Wybunbury Church.

Happily there exists in the English temperament, high or low, an in eradicable appreciation of courageous straightforwardness, that soon tells, even when ideas seem totally antagonistic, to the advantage of the true man ; and with it a healthy contempt for ostentation and sham, that will not be gainsaid, or blinded by any throwing of gold dust into the eyes.

These were the conditions half a century ago ; now, the duke's son goes into business, the business man's son into the Peerage. This fusion of old and new families, of cotton and coronets, tea and titles,—refining the one, opening the eyes and rousing the dormant energies of the other—has resulted in a "blend," alike refreshing, stimulating, and strengthening to the fortunate partakers thereof, and benefiting to the nation at large.

Boswell tells us that Dr. Johnson, in his high and mighty fashion, once said, "The British merchant is a new species of gentleman." Of the heights of culture, social position, and political influence, to which the British manufacturer—or even the tradesman—would or could rise, even the keen-sighted doctor had no prevision.

The Lancashire Public Schools Association had now become the National Public Schools Association, and save for occasional leaders and letters in the *Examiner*, Mr. Mills took no further active part in the movement. He writes to Dr. Hodgson (then living in Edinburgh) as follows:—

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

NANTWICH, 1854-55.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was glad to find that you had seized the opportunity of delivering yourself gallantly of your honest convictions in the matter of State support to the schools. Nothing could be more trenchant than your demonstration of the absurdity of the present system, or no system. I congratulate you on the effectiveness of the report, and trust you will hear of its producing good results.

"The subject of Mr. Martineau's protest is precisely the one to draw out his strength, moral and intellectual, in both of which departments he is as one of the sons of Anak. Have you seen a paper in the current number of the *British Quarterly*, dealing heavily with Martineau and the Unitarian body generally? The reviewer goes in for execution, and some really good strokes are planted, and though there is a good deal of the *ex cathedra* tone of the Orthodox school,

there is in it something to be learnt, and you know, *fastest*, &c.

"We hold you fast to the promised visit. Is Mrs. H. still in Westmoreland?—Yours faithfully,

JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—Have you read 'Cranford'? Alexander has sent it to us, and we are enjoying it greatly; my wife is busy trying to find parallels between Nantwich and Cranford—perhaps not quite in vain."

During a short visit to Rochdale with the two little girls, Amy and Maggie, there occurred the death of a beautiful girl, a great favourite of ours:—

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

"May 25, 1854.

"I hope to reach Rochdale on Saturday at eight. I shall drop a line to Jacob Bright to-day. . . .

"Alas for poor Annie Marsden! One seems to stagger with a sense of the world's motion under our feet, and yet we would scarcely thank for solid footing if it did not resemble the pleasant paths of the past, which are growing dim in the distant vista behind us, and which echo faintly and more faintly with dying adieus. For myself I am conscious of a certain wire permeating my economy, and which Nature behind her veil cunningly manipulates, while I grin and dance and call it life.

"Kiss those two poor little puppets for me, but don't tell them about the wire. Come what may, we have each other and our bairns.

JOHANN.

"P.S.—George Dawson lectures at Crewe, and goes on to Nantwich."

J. MILLS to MRS. MILLS.

“HOME, May 30, 1854.

“DEAR ISA,—I reached Crewe from Rochdale about six, and met George Dawson at the train from Birmingham. His lecture was a treat in its own peculiar way, and he pleased me well with the manly and logical tone of his allusions to the Eastern Question.

“He was guarded and reticent in matters of distinctive religious faith, announcing with great boldness and clearness the leading beliefs in God and Providence. He seems to be now entirely cut off from Manchester and its school—chiefly on account of his outspokenness on the moot points of political economy and peace-at-any-price.

“I have thought much since I left you yesterday about your quiet looks, and wondered what could be the cause, whether physical or mental: was it indigestion or sorrow?—crab or pathos?

JOHANN.”

Charles Swain in writing to thank Mr. Mills for his notice of his dramatic chapters, says, “I trust when next in Manchester you will call upon me; it would give me great pleasure to know you personally.” This led to a pleasant interchange of visits.

About this time Emerson’s “English Traits” came out, and was eagerly read up to a certain point; then did Mr. Mills wax wroth, and he wrote to Mr. Ireland, “What has come over Emerson? Can you understand this libel on English poetry? Some protest will surely be made. Come and talk it over.”

Meanwhile, after much cogitation, and pacing to

and fro in "Meditation Walk," he went into his library, and soon brought me the following *jeu d'esprit*, dashed off at white heat. When Alexander Ireland arrived, bringing with him an indignant letter from Dr. Hodgson, Mr. Mills produced his paper. Mr. Ireland's first idea was to send it to the *Examiner*; second thoughts, however, decided against this course. Both shrank from hurting publicly one whom both revered. Mr. Ireland had a copy printed, and [declared he would send it to Emerson, but it is not likely that he ever did so. It was read by many friends, and the general verdict was that of Mr. Dunckley—"Serve him right!" The manuscript was quietly laid aside, to be unearthed after many years.

"THE POET'S COMPLAINT."

"Poetry is degraded and made ornamental. Pope and his school wrote poetry fit to be put on frosted cake. . . . What did Walter Scott write without stint? A rhymed traveller's guide to Scotland.¹ Dickens wrote London tracts; Macaulay teaches that 'Good' means Good to eat, to wear, material commodity. . . . The bias of Englishmen to practical skill has reacted on the national mind, the voice of their modern muse has a taint of the steam whistle. . . . As if inspiration had ceased, as if no vast hope, no religion, no song of joy, existed any more. . . . I seem to walk on a marble floor where nothing will grow, no poet dare murmur of beauty out of the precinct of his rhymes. . . . The island is a roaring volcano of values and tariffs. . . . The poetry of course is low and

¹ [Strange that in 1897 the MS. of "Marmion" sold for £1000!]

prosaic. We want the miraculous, the beauty which we can manufacture at no mill. . . . Shall I find my heavenly bread in the reigning poets? Where is great design in modern English poetry? The English have lost sight of the fact that poetry exists to speak the spiritual law."—*Emerson's "English Traits," 1856.*

[Before Emerson wrote these scornful words, Browning had written "Paracelsus" and "Men and Women"; Bailey, "Festus"; Sutton, "The Evangel of Love" (1846), so admired by Emerson that on his way to England in 1847 he expressly wished to meet the writer; and Tennyson, "In Memoriam," in 1850, six years before "English Traits" appeared.]

"Let no wretch think Fate is hard
 Till he's been a British Bard!
 Let stonebreakers smite the flint,
 Let lawyers learn their legal squint,
 Let undertakers sell their grief,
 Let Mayhew grind an honest thief,
 Let fishers drag their empty nets,
 Let bankrupts flounder through their debts—
 Do any hard or hopeless thing—
 But never, never learn to sing!

Since first the British lyre was strung
 A hundred mighty bards have sung
 For immortality or supper,
 From Chaucer down to Martin Tupper.
 A hundred arched and pillared fanes
 Shroud with their shade our little names;
 And could we catch a slant of sun,
 Old Phœbus wears a suit of dun.
 A cotton "consordino" fuz
 Damps all our music to a buz.

Of all the myths in Fancy's range
 There's none but suffers a steam change.
 Arachne's bran new spinning treddle
 Has now an Exhibition Medal.
 Poor Pegasus his fire must rule
 To yoke with a self-acting mule,
 For should we bolt and guide the brute
 To some divine poetic route
 Where, in a rainbowed mist of dreams,
 We lose the scurry and the screams,
 Valhalla's door is quickly slammed
 Against us, and the song is damned !

One critic bids us 'sing the age'
 That puts another in a rage :
 One says, 'Take Homer for your guide ;'
 Another, 'Thrust the past aside !'
 So round a world of patent fact
 Beats Fancy's broken wing distract.
 And Medley reigns instead of song,
 And genius raves, sublimely wrong !

And now—Fate's last and worst infliction—
 Judge Lynch extends his jurisdiction
 From Western wilds to our Parnassus,
 And coolly writes us down for asses !
 In Helicon profanely spits,
 And whittles all our lyres to bits !
 Kicks with a sneer poor Pope's dead dust,
 And blows a cloud round Scott's pale bust ;
 The living and the dead abuses,
 And bowls big words at little Muses,
 Until, with fractured scalps and shins,
 The Sacred Nine drop like ninepins.
 Good Heavens ! with bowie-blade he'll tackle us
 Because our beauty's not miraculous !
 'Law Spiritual'—'Heavenly Bread'—
 'Design, deliver, or you're dead !'

Oh, truculent Minos of the West !
 Be merciful and take our best.
 If not divinest aliment,
 At least you steal it ; be content
 By spiritual law to get
 All that you can, and shirk the debt.
 What matters it to you, forsooth,
 That poets have a hungry tooth,
 And hope to gain in ‘Compensation’
 An earthly for a heavenly ration ?

Oh ! had we only known that land
 Where miracles strew either strand—
 That land which whips the world, I guess,
 In all but brag and selfishness—
 In modest peace, and calm content
 With Nature’s honest increment—
 In science physical and mental
 From dental up to transcendental—
 In books which put to nether shame
 The clustered lights of elder fame—
 Where every bard beats Pope ‘a-heap’
 And guide-book Scott’s are held dirt-cheap—
 Where spiritual law doth write
 Her decalogue in *black and white*,
 Where mingled races share the sod,
 And man holds man a tempted God !

Oh, had we all this worth to fire us,
 And all this beauty to inspire us,
 We’d grind it as celestial grist,
 And knead it with a pious fist,
 And bake it with love’s ardent glow,
 And heavenly bread should fill the Row !

“J. M.”

In addition to our own relations, who greatly enjoyed a breath of unsmoked country atmosphere,

and brought to us in exchange welcome echoes of the outer world, our lives were brightened by the frequent visits of the many friends, musical and literary, genial and sympathetic in tastes, we had left behind ; for Mr. Mills missed the stimulating effect of former constant intercourse, and welcomed such visits with almost boyish glee. Amongst them, Alexander Ireland, Dr. Hodgson, Edmund Kell Blyth, Jacob Bright, and John Stores Smith ("Mirabeau" Smith) often came, and once (I think in 1852) Smith came in unexpectedly, just on purpose to stay a night and tell us all about his visit to Charlotte Brontë. Another time Mr. Peacock, Alexander Ireland, Harry Rawson, and Jacob Bright came together, and had a great symposium of talk and music, and the day after a long walk into the heart of the country.

After joining the *Examiner* in 1854, Mr. Dunckley (not then either "Verax" or Doctor) would come, with Mr. Ireland or Dr. Hodgson. Then when any lecturer came, we were only too glad to entertain him—Walter Montgomery amongst the number. Clara Lucas Balfour came to a temperance meeting; we took greatly to each other, especially she to Mr. Mills, and she came later on a visit, and once again after we settled in Bowdon.

Of the honoured guest—Louis Kossuth—whose visit was the great event to us of our stay at Nantwich—I must speak farther on.

MRS. J. MILLS to MARGARET PETRIE.

"NANTWICH, September 1853.

"DEAR MARGARET,—You remember when you were over admiring the quaint old Market Hall, and going with me to buy meat, &c. Well, yesterday was the annual hiring-day for servants, and a new and busy scene it was! Farm lads in all the glory of ruddy, polished faces, fine and awkward in wonderful neckties, and best corduroys. Farm lasses, also, beaming and shy, pranked out in Sunday best, with bright many-coloured strings to the cottage bonnets, and posies in their hands. I wanted domestics, so my friend Mrs. Boote, from Weston Hall, who also wanted some half-dozen fresh farm hands, promised to come early and take me with her. . . . High Street was crowded, as we threaded our way to the Market Hall. There stood in rows on one side the boys, on the other the girls, most of them wanting farm or dairy work, but a few more ambitious ones wanting to come into the town. As we walked up and down, quick, anxious glances were thrown at us, and I felt conscious that the scanning for judgment or liking was not all on one side. Mrs. Boote said to a group, 'This lady wants two young servants for a house in town; any that would like that, come forward.' Out of several I chose two maids; one, Sarah (16), short and dumpy, with red-apple cheeks, bright eyes, model of sturdy health; the other, Annie (17), tall for her age, slim and timid, but with, I thought, the making of a waitress. Neither of them could either read or write—rough material perhaps, but hopeful subjects for the training experiment you know I have set my heart upon; so I engaged them for a year, no other terms would be thought of, Annie at seven, and Sarah at eight pounds a year. The hiring over, all gave themselves up to jollity; there were shows and drums, and the shops had a rare good time of it—the country people having saved up for the yearly clothing supplies. Without Pritchard¹ I could hardly make this venture, but she is as

¹ My mother, after a fashion some mothers have, had, when she found I was going so far away amongst strangers, deprived herself of an old trusty servant for my sake; a perfect servant in every department; a quiet, true, Christian woman, counsellor, and friend.

wishful to try the experiment as I am. How often I thank mother for her goodness in letting me have her ; I hope she does not miss her too much. I wonder how it will be at the year's end ; for good or bad I must keep them so long.

"ISABELLA."

[The experiment did answer, both girls stayed some years ; Annie got married, and Sarah came with us at the end of twelve years to Bowdon.]

MRS. J. MILLS to MARGARET PETRIE.

"September 1853.

"To MARGARET,—Many happy returns of the day, dear child ; Johann joins me in love, and in a present of two pairs of useful Nantwich gloves, like those you saw me wearing. They are of a special and famous leather, tanned and made here. Tanning and gloves and shoe-making seem to be the three old staple trades ; I bought them from a Mrs. Davies, a middle-aged lady, who had a counter half-across the front room of one of the old houses in Pepper Street. Mr. Horton says that for nearly 300 years this business has been carried on in the same place ; so your gloves have a long pedigree. I say 'a lady' advisedly, for no other term would be correct.

"I must tell you that a feature that has struck us is the very different type of shop-owners here to those we know of in Lancashire. . . . A kind of quiet dignity, as of assured position, known to all around, perhaps a half-conscious sense of ancestry, for doubtless many of them are collateral if somewhat remote descendants of good old families, or yeomen of even more ancient standing. Some of them have achieved a competence, and live in nice houses outside the town ; some behind their shops in roomy but dark houses, which, however, look on to pleasant gardens. The absence of dialect is noticeable too ; they speak well, and they dress well, serve you courteously and zealously, but without any pressure or fuss.

If there be one or two of the hand-washing, bowing-and-scraping sort, you may be sure they are immigrants, not 'natives and to the manner born.' Johann says, 'It is greatly owing to the absence of the vulgarising element of keen and reckless competition, and that there exists a kind of etiquette of non-interference with each other's special "lines."' Also there are one or two shops kept by maiden ladies, and you may be sure that, the shops closed, the shutters up, there is lived in the little parlour behind, a refined and dainty, if simple, life. They exhibit their laces so elegantly, with little finger out-curved, one feels it quite a privilege to buy from them. They are very independent, and, so far as I can judge, of more pronounced character and opinion than their fellow-tradesmen, reading much in the evening, and very glad of the loan of any new periodical or book.

"We held, six months ago, a committee of ways and means, with satisfactory results. Whether John is most banker-born, or poet-born, or musician-born, I have not quite made up my mind; sometimes I think one, sometimes another; but it is evident that, whilst he can successfully manipulate thousands —would probably make a fine Chancellor of the Exchequer, and manage the nation's revenue to the nation's profit—the financing of domestic details are altogether too overpowering, too worrying, and quite beyond him, and he is now only too glad to be rid of it all. You see, most men suffer less of a pang in the giving of a note or cheque for ten pounds than in doling out a sovereign ten times over! So we held our committee of two; he gave over to my charge, and responsibility too, every item about the house, wages, garden, &c. . . . I feel as if I had come into a kingdom, with scope for expenditure, also scope for contrivance and economy after my own ideas. It's very jolly altogether; and he is vastly relieved, for when he has done in the bank he wants to get away to his books and writing. . . . It's a great virtue when a man knows what he cannot do, and accepts the limitations! . . . How I run on! But all this will interest mother, who is such a splendid manager. Now I have a chance of practice, I hope some day to approach her standard.

"ISABELLA."

MRS. J. MILLS to MRS. PETRIE.

"SMEDLEY'S, MATLOCK, 1854.

"DEAR MOTHER,—Here I am, not especially for treatment, but for a week's experience and training on Mrs. Smedley's lines, which differ somewhat from those at Ben Rhydding. We soon found that the reign of blister, lancet, and leech was not over in Nantwich. No homœopath was to be had nearer than Chester, but water, hot or cold, can always be had. Some sad experiences in visiting the poor people near, determined me to try and arrange for some help and instruction. Opposite to our entrance are rows of cottages, mostly old, built long ago for the mill-hands ; there is much illness there, especially amongst the children, yet the conditions were not so bad, the terrible cholera plague of 1847 had roused the authorities, and drainage and other sanitary improvements had been effected. No, it was not bad drainage, or dirt, for save where drunkenness was the cause, one rarely saw a dirty cottage interior ; clean window-panes, curtained with plants ; steps brown-ochred and edged on Sundays with a thin line of white pipeclay ; a bright, clean-swept hearth, and a well-swept floor—all told of a certain housewifery pride and industry. The mischief lay in what Johann calls the 'crass ignorance' as to any rudiments of healthy conditions, also some strange superstitions yet prevailing. What do you think ! The child, about twelve months old, of our gardener, who lives at the gate, had thrush. Going in one morning to see it, I found the mother sitting by the fire with the child on her knee, and in her hand a bit of white muslin, which she held close to the baby's mouth. I then saw it was vigorously sucking at the muslin. 'What are you doing, Martha ? How is baby ? 'He'll be better soon, ma'am ; Sam's been out and got a young frog—it's in here, th' child's sucking away ; it wouldn't have it at first, but see now !'

"I felt sick, and inclined to snatch the horror away ! 'I wouldn't give it any more now,' I said, and she took it out. 'What did you do that for, Martha ? who told you ?'

" 'Oh, ma'am, we always does ; it's got "frog i' th' mouth," and it's far better till physic !'

" I was beaten ! Here was homœopathy with a vengeance ! I persuaded her to give a hot bath, and then to let me put a body compress on. The child recovered—but the frog got the credit !

" As to fresh air, the notion is in case of illness to exclude all you can of it. I went to see a young woman of twenty. Her mother said she was consumptive, and the doctor said 'she would go like her sister had ; they could only keep her warm and feed her well. She had been took worse, and stopped in bed the last three weeks.' Entering the bedroom, I found the girl propped up, looking flushed and weary, coughing, and at times panting for breath ; but oh, the atmosphere ! The hinges even of the little casement window were stuffed up ; a bag of straw up the chimney, and bits of list nailed on the bottom of the door ! To remain more than a few minutes was impossible ! Downstairs I pleaded with the mother for a little fresh air to be admitted once a day at least, and tried to show her why. ' No, it 'ud kill her right off ! Why, Dinah, the sister, were there more till a year, and the window were never opened !'

" At last she said, ' Well, she cannot get better anyway ; you can try if you like.' Next day the chimney was cleared ; next, the invalid covered over whilst the window was opened for a few minutes, and so gradually until on fine days it stood open all day, and she said, ' Oh, it was nice and fresh ! ' The room and bedclothes were clean, and her food was good. A jug of field-flowers stood on the table, showing loving attention, but she was dying for lack of oxygen. Before long she was sent to a farm near, was out all day, began to help in the farm-work, and got better. She has just been in to see us.

" I have had some queer experiences here, and taken about every kind of bath they give, and Mrs. Smedley has given me what she calls an 'outside bag,' containing sheets, macintosh, and other appliances ready for use when called for. There lives in a little cottage near us an elderly woman, Sarah Welsh ; she has just enough to keep her out of the workhouse ; has seen better days, is very kind-hearted, and often in demand in case of neighbours' illnesses or need. We have had a talk,

and she is going to Matlock for a while to see the treatment, and Mrs. Smedley will charge nothing, and help her a little. Then she can, I hope, take in some degree the place here of the old leech-woman, and also earn a little. I am taking back all the paraphernalia, and having a vapour bath put up over the laundry. I go home to-morrow.

ISABELLA."

[Mrs. Welsh proved invaluable, and in time got quite a connection, even amongst people of a class who could pay her for attendance, and packing, and bathing, &c., especially after a successful venture we made with a family of children attacked with measles, which was much talked about, even the doctors coming to make inquiries.]

1856-57.—Since Kossuth's visit to Manchester, in 1850, Mr. Mills had kept more or less in touch with him. The following letter, written in reply to one from Mr. Mills, well illustrates the dignified, independent spirit of the great patriot. Mr. Ireland, having heard that Kossuth was somewhat in straits, and his wife ill, told Mr. Mills, who ventured to send him a small cheque for personal use. Here is the reply :—

Louis Kossuth to J. Mills.

"8 SOUTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
LONDON, April 18, 1856.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Such an 'innumerable number of letters (some five hundred in three weeks), regarding arrangements for lectures, has been pouring in upon me, that it is perfectly impossible for me even to read them immediately, and I could

but charge my Hungarian ‘aide-de-camp’ to lay before me such as needed immediate attention. Thus it came to pass that I am only just made acquainted with your favour of March 29th. I can but briefly express my most sincere thanks for your kindness and sympathy, which I shall bear in grateful recollection; at the same time I beg to return your cheque, which I feel not at liberty to accept. For my own self I cannot accept anything not earned by my own work; this determination, and the motive with which it originated, cannot fail to meet your approbation, I trust.

“And as to my country, if somebody would assist me with a couple of hundred thousand pounds, I would feel justified in accepting it, because I am sure that I could accomplish great things by it; but small sums I could not employ with any prospect of success; therefore I cannot allow myself to depart from my principle to rely on my own exertions for my own and the support of my family.

“My sincere thanks once more, and allow me to subscribe myself with affectionate regards and particular consideration,

“Dear sir, your most obliged servant,

“Kossuth.”

[It was well known that Kossuth often impoverished himself in relieving the needs of his exiled countrymen in London.]

On February 25, 1857, he wrote fixing March 16–17 for his two lectures in Crewe, and accepting an invitation to stay a few days with us “with my friend and aide-de-camp, Colonel Ihaz.”

Kossuth’s visit to us was an exciting and never-to-be-forgotten event—a red-letter week!

On the 15th March he arrived with his aide-de-camp, Colonel Ihaz, and Mr. Ireland. Great preparations had been made, and we wanted Alex-

ander Ireland to keep us right as to observances, and help us generally, for as he had previously entertained his Excellency, he knew what would conduce to his comfort. His gentle dignity was very impressive, but he looked weary, and the Colonel arranged for him to retire for an hour or two before dinner. The untiring, watchful devotion of Colonel Ihaz was beautiful to see. He was the life of the party, and to the children a wonder and a delight ; he raced them in the garden, tossed them in his arms, played new games, and in a day they were all tyrannising over him, pulling his beard, and teasing him in every way. He was a veritable piece of quicksilver ; but even then every sense was alert to note the will of his idolised chief. He rarely left him, and slept always in a little bed in the same room, taking him his morning coffee and letters, Kossuth not appearing before about eleven o'clock. That was my chance of a little quiet talk all to myself before my husband came out of the bank ; then he monopolised his guest, and Mr. Ireland and I consoled each other. What long talks they had, his Excellency and his host, walking in the garden or smoking in the library !

On the 16th March our party left about seven o'clock for Crewe, in two carriages. In the first sat my husband and Kossuth, Mr. Ireland and myself. In the second, Mr. Harlock, Colonel Ihaz, and two other friends.

A great crowd greeted us as we entered the town, and we were wedged in by people crowding to shake hands. Flaming torches relieved the darkness, and at last an attempt was made to unharness the horses, and draw the carriage to the hall. But Kossuth would not permit it ; he said he would "rather get out and walk !" So Mr. Ireland stood up, and cried out at the top of his voice, "Gentlemen, his Excellency begs you to desist ; it will give him great pain if you draw him to the hall !" Then Mr. Mills joined in, and at last we were allowed to move on.

Of his eloquence—of the touching heartiness of the response to his appeals—it is impossible to give an adequate description. The next night we went earlier, and got in more quietly, but on leaving, there was a band and a procession waiting, which accompanied us half-way to Nantwich. The day after we had a reception and open house ; the magnates, with one or two exceptions, kept aloof, but many people came in from distances in the country. Our friend, Mr. Silver, Mr. Macaulay from Hodnet, and Thomas Bateman too, all came to see the Hungarian hero, and some said, "he looked like a king !"

The gracious manner of Kossuth soon made one feel at home with him ; yet with some sense of aloofness, caused by a certain abstraction, as though he were living two lives, always brooding over his

country's wrongs, and how best to help her, whilst forcing himself to the routine and amenities of ordinary life. At least, that was my feeling ; but directly he began to speak of those things nearest his heart, and felt he had a sympathetic listener his whole face lighted up, the sad severity disappeared, fire was in his eyes, leashed passion trembled in his voice. Listening spellbound, one was conscious only of a kingly patriot exiled—a country betrayed.

I never saw Mr. Mills more completely carried away ; the remembrance of this time was a lifelong joy to him. On the 18th they left us ; I recall Kossuth now, as he sat in the carriage, quietly smiling at Colonel Ihaz, who, as they drove away, was pelting the children with bonbons, and they trying to hit him back. Mr. Mills and Mr. Ireland went with them to Crewe.

And so ended that wonderful week !

Kossuth gave to our eldest daughter a copy of Cassell's "History of Hungary," which she carefully preserves to give to her now grown-up sons. In this book he and his aide-de-camp wrote short inscriptions. A few days later came the following letter :—

L. KOSSUTH to J. MILLS.

"LONDON, March 27, 1857.

"DEAR SIR,—Owing to some absence, and to many pressing engagements, I am rather late to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 19th inst. and draft for £42, 5s. 6d., being

the proceeds of my two lectures at Crewe. My best thanks for both.

"My visit to Crewe has in every regard left the most pleasant recollections on my memory.

"From the inhabitants of Crewe I received the benefit of an enthusiastic welcome, and the certitude of a cheering sympathy.

"I have enjoyed your hospitalities as liberal as cordial, deriving in my estimation a touching character from (if you will allow me so to call it) the affectionate heartiness with which it was tendered to the wandering exile.

"And the pleasure which I was permitted to derive from all this has been elevated to a sense of intense gratification by the experience that my native land—so dear to my heart—has long been an object of interest, both with yourself and Madame Mills, to an extent I scarcely ever had noticed before.

"To meet with such an interest, coupled with so extensive a knowledge of facts, was a treat as I can scarcely expect to enjoy, and the charming *émoi* of grace and sympathy which Madame Mills cast over it will long remain a source of cheering consolation to my mind.

"Accept both the assurance of my sincere gratitude; allow me to hope that though I cannot expect to have improved on your good opinions by my presence (I fear that I nearly always must lose rather than gain by the angulousities of my habits), at least I shall not have abated your sympathies for my country's cause.

"With high regards of esteem and consideration,

"Most truly yours,

"KOSSUTH.

"JOHN MILLS, Esq."

Accept both the assurance
of my sincere gratitude; Allow me to hope, that though
I can not expect, to have im-
proved your good opinion, by my present
(I fear that I nearly always
must lose rather than gain by
the angularities of my habits)
at least I shall not have abated
your sympathies for my coun-
try's cause.

With high regards of esteem
& consideration

Most truly yours

L. Kossuth

John Mills Esq

CHAPTER V

IN July 1857 we visited Ben Rhydding; Dr. Hodgson was then living at Tronfelen, near Cader Idris. Selections from letters from this time to 1860 may be of interest, and tell their own story:—

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, August 25, 1857.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your Dolgelly letter, with its pleasant account of your wanderings to and fro on the face of the earth. I am glad to think that you have been spending so delightfully the interval since I saw you at Bowdon, and a little more selfishly glad that it occurred to you to tell it to me. However, I know not only your keen zest for the good things with which Nature loads her table, but the generous social feeling with which you serve the viands to your friends. One need not wonder that you cannot bolt so many mountains without handing a crisp fragment—of Cader Idris, for instance—to any friend you may be thinking of at the moment, especially if you know him to be starving on the flat, stale, and unprofitable plains of Cheshire.

"I, too, have had my little feast, as you know. Wharfedale is a pleasant enough retreat for a few weeks, with or without the accompaniment of water treatment. I threaded my way through vales and over hills, paid diurnal visits to "the Cow" as sedulously as a milkmaid, drank Atlantic Oceans of cold water, and enjoyed agreeable society in the Ben Rhydding drawing-room, seeing much of Prof. M'Dougal of Edinburgh, successor to John Wilson in the M.P. chair there.

" If you can give us a few days, pray let us have a line that we may have a definite anticipation to enjoy.—Ever yours most faithfully,

JOHN MILLS.

*

— "P.S.—As I strolled one hot day down from the head of a little moorland waterfall that rushes through a rocky gully in search of the 'Wharfe,' the breeze blew towards me some premature drops of cooling spray ; these I, laughing, caught, and send them on to you embodied in a little song. Be not too critical :—

" THE MOUNTAIN STREAM.

The little mountain stream
 Winds o'er its rocky bed,
 Making sweet earthly music
 To the great Heaven o'erhead.

Here o'er the stone it glides,
 And there it must creep under ;
 Breaks now its soft, slow sweep
 To a plunge of petty thunder.

The little heath-flower nestles
 To the tall fern, leaning over ;
 Soft music soothes the heart-beat
 Of a maiden and her lover.

Even the green young moss
 Clings to the grey old stone ;
 The little stream makes *social* lays,
 And nothing is alone.

Even I, sole wand'rer here
 In quiet mountain nooks ;
 Even I can catch some tender tones
 And meet some loving looks.

Nature ! thy face is strung
 For souls to thrill along ;
 Touch any chord thou wilt, 'tis Love
 • That makes and hears the song.

"J. M.

"ILKLEY, July 19, 1857."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, March 1858.

"MY DEAR HODGSON,—I saw your review of Ellis's educational book, and had no difficulty in identifying the hand. Have you seen Kelly's book on Dr. Davidson's, and the pamphlet of the 'Two Graduates'? The doctor has, unfortunately, given these men the power to do him some harm without benefiting themselves. The whole question with them seems to be, not 'what is true,' but 'what is safe.'

"JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"May 15.

"MY DEAR HODGSON,—I deeply appreciate the thoughtful friendliness of the preparation and gift of the Richter portraits which I have just received from Alexander Ireland, and which stand one on either side of me while I write. One of these I take to be an engraving, the other a photograph copy (worked upon by manual process), of the portrait which I had so long. The former may be, as I think you said it was, the truest picture, but I confess the latter is more to my mind, and *ought* to be the truest representation of 'Old Einzige'; I don't intend to relinquish the belief that it is so until I am unkindly confronted with demonstration of the contrary. The one picture may be a fact, the other is a poem. Jean Paul was more of a poem than a fact. Both pictures have, however, one great virtue in common; the collodion may be false or fugitive, but the sentiment of friendly regard which suggested their gift is true and indelible.—Yours,

JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"July 10, 1858.

"**MY DEAR DOCTOR,**—The poem¹ is mine, as you supposed, but it is quite wrong of you to detect me upon such trifling provocation. I hope (and believe) there is no analogy between my poor 'minor third' (which, by the way, is an invariable fact of the cuckoo's song) and the ludicrous pedantry of the Theban whom you quote. My expression is saved from a *soufflon* of bathos which attaches to technicals in poetry, by two circumstances:—1st, the poem itself is half a burlesque, with a dash of Planche and Ingoldsby about it; and 2nd, the knowledge of music and of natural history is now so widely diffused, that the truth and beauty of the allusions are recognisable by the greater number of those who would read such a thing as this at all. The meaning of all this is obvious, that I would rather you had found me out by my poetry than by my music.—Yours very truly,

JOHN MILLS.

"*P.S.*—On reference I find that E. B. Browning makes free use of her 'major' and 'minors,' even when in her most serious moods, so that I am in good company. The shelter of a petticoat is better than triple steel, so I defy you valiantly."

In 1858 two notable Nantwich events occurred—the railway was opened from Crewe to Shrewsbury; and the Town-Hall also was completed and opened in October with great rejoicing—Clara Novello coming to sing at the concert mentioned, in aid of the fund.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, August 15, 1858.

"**MY DEAR FRIEND,**—I have seen A. Ireland, and have learnt that, from circumstances arising in the *Examiner* office, he will find it quite impossible to visit you at the date you

¹ The Lost Fairy, "Vox Humana," p. 34.

mention. Having taken counsel together we have concluded that, after all, it will be better to go to you in September. *I* cannot get to you on this side of the Concert, whose programme I enclose, and the conduct of which as well as the building of the hall rests mainly on my hands. I do not propose to go to you *alone* on the 20th, as Ireland and myself have talked each other into the notion that this journey *needs* to be done jointly. I may tell you, *entre nous*, that he professes to dread you in the dog-days—not from any suspicion of hydrophobic taint, but because you are such an insatiable devourer of fifty-mile days of hill and dale, that it is desirable to husband his legs under his peaceful desk till the thermometer drops about 20 degrees! We are both sorry to miss the translator of Fichte, by whose labour I long ago benefited, and whom I should have been well pleased to know.

“Have you read Kingsley’s ‘Andromeda’?—there are pages of glorious lines in it, but the hexameters are more Schiller-esque than Homerish.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN MILLS.”

[Mr. Ireland and Mr. Mills visit Tronfelen,
Wales:]

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“NANTWICH, October 3, 1858.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will see from this that we (Alexander and self) found our way safely across Cader to Dolgelly, and through the successive stages homeward. The two days’ coaching were a lazy pleasure to us which I cannot expect you to appreciate, as you are totally wanting in the faculty for being lazy! From Dolgelly to Barmouth we were in a mist, and could of course see little of the noble scenery through which we passed, but afterwards the weather cleared, and the journey by Harlech, Madoc, Bedd Gelert (where I found friends), &c., was fully enjoyed. The ascent of Snowdon would evidently be child’s play compared with that of Cader from Carnarvon to Bangor.

“Next day a fine ride by Capel Curig and Llanwrst to Conway, and so home, parting at Chester with a new and most agreeable store of remembrances, *quorum magna pars*, &c.

"I trust your present views are as good and clear as those we recently talked over together, and that if you find difficulties, they may be only such as will challenge, without baffling, your great energies. We, here, watch your course with sympathy and interest. Mrs. Mills joins me in kindest regards. You are vastly popular in the nursery.—I am, yours faithfully,

"JOHN MILLS."

[This was evidently Mr. Mills' first visit to Cader, but he did not then discover Llyn-y-Cai.]

[Dr. Hodgson had recently been appointed as Assistant Commissioner to inquire into Primary Education in England :—]

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, October 13, 1858.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—What you feel about London I have often felt; did you ever read a poem of Charles Mackay's, called 'The Drop of Water'? It is in his book, 'The Legends of the Isles.' Harrison the actor told Mackay (who told me) that he wept profusely over that poem, it was so sweet an expression of his own sensation of solitariness when first coming to London. To your nature it will prove a great consolation that your impending labours will have a direct bearing on the amelioration of some of the festering mischiefs of that stupendous community. You are one who should leave your mark upon it before the end. As for natural beauty, I thought I had known and felt something of it; but my recent experience in your company makes me feel how thoroughly I am in my novitiate. That was a grand matriculation on the top of old Cader! Oh for next term, with you to guide me in my Gradus and (Welsh) Parnassus!

"I forward by this post a memoir of my father, written by my brother Sam for the sectional religious magazine. The life itself is as simple and unpretending as its subject, and it will not consume more than a few minutes under your quick eye.

The verses¹ at the end you may be able to filiate without help.—Ever yours faithfully,JOHN MILLS."

[This time the Doctor took Mr. Mills to Llyn-y-Cai.]

J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

"NANTWICH, June 14, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Many thanks for your prelection to the Economic Section, which for my mind's refection, and as food for much reflection, received its kind projection by post in this direction. A first and brief inspection shows clear thought and warm affection (heart's and brain's bright intersection), while error's great deflection received a keen dissection and then its due correction, new truth lends fresh complexion to the old truth's resurrection. I fear I have dropt into rhyme, a blunder worse than any crime. 'Tis bad to prose when writing verse, but rhyming in one's prose is worse. Think how the dreary task would stall ye to read a page of rhymed Macaulay, or if Carlyle should hurl his scoff on us in devil's jinglement cacophonous !

"I tear myself from this sing-song to say that it is all the fault of those who attribute to me all the metrical diabolisms that appear in the public prints with the deplorably common letter 'M' thereto attached! Don't you know that 'M' stands for a thousand? To apply the 'Boots'² to me is a revival of an old mode of torture unworthy of modern times and of your generous nature. I am a banker, and no poet, and am too busy ringing changes. I would quote the noble adage *ne sutorte*, but that it seems inapplicable to a vindication from a charge of making a 'Boot.'—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

[From Mr. Edmund Kell Blyth, in acknowledgment—]

¹ Lines to his father, "Vox Humana," p. 32.

² A political poem that appeared in the *Examiner*.

ment of the *British Quarterly Review* for June 1859, containing an article on Mendelssohn:—]

E. K. BLYTH to J. MILLS.

“June 30, 1859.

“MY DEAR MILLS,—Thanks for your jolly letter of the 20th, and your capital article in the *British Quarterly Review*, which I have read with great pleasure. Also thanks for your society in London for four days; I hope such meetings will be neither few nor far between. You have no idea how thoroughly I enjoy the intercourse with a musical man whose mind, feelings, and ideas on that subject are so thoroughly in unison with my own—no, I won’t say ‘in unison,’ but in harmony in the common chord—for I duly estimate the higher gifts and greater musical knowledge which (as well as the greater power of using long words and making puns) you possess over me, and I should say that if I may put myself as the fifth in the chord, you are the eighth.

“I read your article last night. I like it exceedingly. I think you fairly estimate Mendelssohn’s great genius when you speak of him as bearing the mantles of Handel, Beethoven, and Haydn. Whom have we now? Costa, Leslie, Lake? How far behind they are in their oratorios to the ‘Messiah’ and the ‘Elijah’!—Ever sincerely yours,

“E. K. BLYTH.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“NANTWICH, September 27, 1859.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—You may be sure I should not have waited till now to send you my latest from the top of Cader if I had known where a note would find you. I had understood you were in Switzerland, but could not learn when you would return. Did you get the note in which I told you (end of July or beginning of August) my intended route? I had a delightful ramble over your old tracks, not the less delightful for being a lonely one. You have furnished me with an admirable precedent for the confession of my enjoyment of a

lonely ramble, which my friends find hard to understand. I took the route by Shrewsbury, Llangollen, Corwen, and Bala, to Dolgelly and Barmouth, at which place I arrived at 10 P.M. of the day on which I left home. I then did pretty thoroughly, and almost entirely on foot, the country from the falls of the Mawddach northerly to Aberdovey in the south. Cader I took from the Tal-y-Llyn side. It was a glorious day's work, and I seem to know now every inch of the throned patriarch, and am familiar with most of his views; with Llyn-y-Cai and its echo and gorge I spent considerable time, and thought out an ode¹ which I have since written, but the infliction of which I mercifully spare you!—Ever yours, JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—If you see the *Examiner* and *Times* daily you would probably detect my little speculation yesterday. I had a note from Dunckley excusing about the 'New Song,' to which he should not have put my initials."

In 1859 Frederick Douglass spent a few days with us at Nantwich; once more he was a fugitive, not now from the slave-hunters, but to avoid arrest by the sheriffs on account of his share in the "Harper Ferry and John Brown affair." He was at first unwilling to attempt to escape arrest, feeling as though it might appear to some people as a desertion of John Brown; but convinced by his friends that he must keep free for further service, he consented to come once more to England. His idea was whilst here to once again go out and try to rouse the sympathies of the English people on the side of the North. But, after holding a few successful meetings, the news came of the death of an idolised daughter, who, as he said, "was the life and

¹ Llyn-y-Cai, "Vox Humana," p. 27.

light of his home!" He gave up all, and determined at any risk to be once more at home, his stay in England in 1859 thus being only six months. The original of the childish tender letter¹ he showed me in 1846 he gave me to keep; the writing is faint and faded, but has been copied.

During the absence of our children at the seaside their father sometimes sent them rhymed letters, which were greatly enjoyed. One time, in reply to inquiry as to how "Jerry," a favourite horse, was behaving, he sent off the following:—

"Our horse Jerry
Is fat, very,
For he loveth much rest,
And food of the best;
The fragrant hay
He rememb'reth alway,
And of beans with bran
Getteth all he can,
And more than he can digest.
And his thirst is so rare
For a nicely chilled tipple,
That three gallons, or four,
Down his gullet will ripple,
And but whet his thirst for more!

And snug in his stalls,
As a prebend of Paul's,
He sleepeth till dawn
In dreams of the *lawn*

¹ His daughter, Rosetta, the writer of the letter (see page 129, and Appendix; page 393), is still living, and was present this year at the unveiling of her father's statue in Rochester.

Which oft through the gate he views ;
And in fancy a rover,
He sniffs the sweet clover
And plants his hot hoofs in the dews ;
And then 'twill betide ill
Who brings bit and bridle,
And wakes him to straw, straps, and duties ;
He'll tip you some trick
Of a bite or a kick—
So spiteful the blasé old brute is !
For fain would he shirk
All compulsion and work,
And the bit not a bit will he bear :
The first touch of its steel
Thrills down to his heel,
And then you may mount if you dare !

And yet is old Jerry
A good horse—very,
If only he were not so fat ;
And I know a few
Pampered humans too,
Who are none the better for that ! ”

NANTWICH, 1858.

In 1860 Mr. Mills took a longer holiday than usual, and with his friend Mr. Blyth went for a walking tour in Italy. It was an exciting period, just at the close of Garibaldi's three months' glorious campaign, and it so happened that they reached Genoa just in time to see a contingent of red-bloused volunteers following Garibaldi to Palermo.

At Nice they called upon Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cowden-Clarke.

The following birthday sonnet was written after his return from Italy :—

“TO ISABEL..

Musing, now silent from my last May theme,
I from my sonnet-flute, with charmed surprise,
Hear somewhat of a mystic breath arise—
Faint sound and far—yet full of a great dream
Of ages and fair lands by Arno's stream,
And softly blending with immortal sighs
Sweet names of Laura and of Beatrice,
Which Love, from Death, doth evermore redeem.

As one won seaward by a dreaming shell,
I panted towards the South's impassioned air,
And learned therein what yet I knew full well,
That Love and Song are native everywhere,
And that to me a name yet more divine
Than Laura or than Beatrice is thine !”

May 18, 1861.

The acquisition of an organ had long been a desideratum, but cost, difficulty of removal, &c., stood in the way. In 1861, however, we went to the second Crystal Palace Exhibition, and there found a harmonium such as had never been built before ; two were sent by Messrs. Boosey as samples. One was already sold, and Mr. Mills bought the other ; it was double the ordinary size of harmoniums, had two manuals, all the usual stops, including the “Vox celeste,” coupled pedals, independent bellows, &c. When our friend Dr. Morel left Bowdon for

London, he wished for one made like it, but could not get it, as W. Evans, who had made and really invented its most delicate points, had died, and Mr. Boosey said, "They could not repeat it, and it would not pay if they could."

From that time the piano did not get so much attention ; the harmonium was a delight and a solace in all troubles to the end of his life ; sometimes I pretended jealousy, and called it "Wife No. 1" ; it was a mercy that I was not quite so music mad, or we should rarely have got a meal punctually ! "How could a man break off in the middle of a symphony or an inspiration ?" The most effective way, in such cases, was to send the youngest to toddle in and pull at father's coat-tails till he turned round to catch her up and carry her, triumphant, into the dining-room, for he never could be impatient with a little child.

The same year he went to the Birmingham Musical Festival, as critic for the *Examiner* ; a short extract from this notice may be of present interest—even to Madame Patti herself :—

" . . . Of the young *débutante* of the present season, Adelina Patti, what more can we say than that she renewed her triumphs, and is, perhaps, the most popular feature of the present festival. Doubtless much of this is due to the *petite* and youthful appearance, which have gained for her the name of the 'Bijou prima donna.' Of the future development of her voice, it would be rash to prophesy, considering the way in which it is now being used. 'To have youth on her side' is hardly an advantage in

executing such *tours de force* as the later Italian opera exacts from its chief representative. Whatever Madlle. Patti attempts of this kind, however, she executes with brilliant success; and in looking at her face there is no room for any feeling but one of hope for a great career. One healthy feature is her evident possession of considerable humour—a faculty which was very pleasantly illustrated in her rendering of the Scotch ballad, ‘Within a Mile o’ Edinboro’ Toon.’”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“ NANTWICH, January 8, 1861.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—The arrival of your little book, with the familiar trilobised shield thereon, has brought my suspended purpose to mind, and I hasten to combine my thanks for your attention in Paris, with thanks for the lectures on ‘Health’ and ‘Wealth,’ and with my best wishes for your happiness, which with you, I know, means active usefulness for the opening year.

“ I almost envy you the persuasive power with which you can express social truths of so great moment as those illustrated in your little book. I particularly burn to lend a hand militant against the superficial trash about political economy which you have dealt with so trenchantly in the early part of your second lecture. I am fresh from Ruskin’s Lake papers, and have longed to pull him down from the fine-tinted cloud of sophisms on which he floats through the air with such Jove-like majesty, glancing with supreme contempt on the poor economists below, whose feet cling to the *terra-firma* of fact and law. My fear is that, in proportion as the educational economists break down the barriers of indifference and ignorance, they will find themselves confronting a phalanx of imaginative men, whose pride of intellect rebels against any system ranging social facts under rigid laws. This is a case in which temperament has almost as much to do with conviction as logic has. Be that as it may, *veritas prævalebit.*

“ Ever yours truly,

“ JOHN MILLS.”

"J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, October 16, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter was so welcome after the long period of silence that preceded it, that it has struck me you are turning your knowledge of economic science to use, in giving an undue value to your news by the creation of an artificial scarcity. You wrote me just before going to Southampton. You were next caught sound of at St. Bees, somewhere on the north-west coast, and finally comes your actual letter, which I seem to have caught flying down the wind like the autumn leaves which are strewing thick our patch of grass. Not that there is anything faded about *your* leaves, for they come with all the freshness of that perennial spring which an active mind bears about with it.

"You see I follow your example in putting down much matter before coming to the point which is the point of real interest to you—namely, our sojourn at Laleham, and news of Miss Pipe and Miss Chambers. Mrs. Mills has had a delightful and stirring week there, and I two charming flights thither and back. The net result is that we can endorse more than all you say of Miss Pipe, and have formed a very high estimate of Miss Chambers's simple nobility of soul. I wish my wife could see more of these admirable women, for they are thoroughly congenial to her nature. Much counsel has been taken between them on matters of education, which may have great and good results. We have brought with us much baggage of maps, books, and ideas.

"During my journey to London I ordered one of the largest and best pedal harmoniums (Evans' patent), and at your next visit I trust it will be ready to discourse to you.

"Edmund Blyth spent an evening with us at Laleham, and we had much music and botany. Mrs. Mills joins me in kindest regards.—Ever yours,

JOHN MILLS."

In 1862 Dr. Hodgson married Emily, daughter of Sir Joshua Walmsley, of Liverpool, and went to live at Tunbridge Wells.

Mrs. J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

"NANTWICH, December 6, 1862.

"I must thank you, my dear friend, on behalf of the children, for Miss Sinclair's letter. It is very kind of you to remember them just now, when you must have so much to think of; but has not happiness a tendency to make us think more readily of the pleasure of others, and to long to make every one partakers in some measure of one's joy?"

"I enclose you two cartes. If you dislike mine I will one day change it for another; it has, I think, rather a cross expression. Johann calls it 'Madam,' but as you have a more amiable looking one to counterbalance this, if you will only kindly look at both at once you will not have a one-sided view of character, and maybe a more truthful one than if you had only the larger one. Love to Mrs. Hodgson."

1862 was a year of quiet study and much writing. A correspondence with Dr. Vaughan, here given, led to the appearance in April of an article on Congregational Psalmody; in July one upon Handel; and in October a notice of "Mendelssohn's Letters from Italy and Switzerland" (translated from the German by Lady Wallace). The article on Congregational Psalmody created a wide interest, and had doubtless a permanent influence upon future methods in relation to that important department of our religious services.

Shortly after Mr. Mills' decease the following letter appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* :—

"THE LATE MR. JOHN MILLS."

"To the Editor of the 'Manchester Guardian.'

"SIR,—I cannot refrain from asking leave for a few lines in which to speak of one little incident in Mr. Mills' literary work—the insight he showed in recognising many years ago the possibilities of the tonic sol-fa system. It must be thirty years since or more that he wrote an article in the *British Quarterly Review* on the subject, concluding with a sentence which I quote from memory, but, I think, with accuracy: 'Here, then, is the instrument; it is for the churches, putting aside prejudice and inertia, to grasp it and consecrate it to their highest uses.' I well remember how this sentence inspired my father, how he set it in heavy type at the head of his leaflets and papers, and how exactly it voiced his own desire to promote congregational singing. When we consider what a small thing the tonic sol-fa movement at that time was, when we remember that Mr. Mills, having been trained on the old system, might be supposed to be possessed of prejudice against the new, the utterance was, I venture to think, in every way remarkable.—Yours, &c.,

"J. SPENCER CURWEN.

"MANCHESTER, September 28 [1896]."

From many other appreciative letters sent, the following from our friend Miss Pipe is selected :—

MISS PIPE to J. MILLS.

"LALEHAM, May 29, 1863.

"MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—I am due elsewhere, but cannot leave this room until I have indited one word of thanks to you for your article on Congregational Psalmody. Seeing a

few hard words in it, I took it down to my dictation class this morning, and while picking them out I became interested in the sentences, but had to close the book until after dinner. I then took it out, and found myself under a spell so potent that I actually went reading on until I had read it all through from beginning to end at a single sitting. This, I believe, is more than I can say of anything else, long or short, that I have begun to read for months. To read through a whole chapter of any treatise is a luxury reserved for the dignified leisure of holiday time ; but to-day I was fascinated, and everything had to wait until the article was done, so wisely charmed the charmer. I am afraid I shall have to teach the children—to get them taught, I mean—the new notation, a very troublesome and disastrous result of the reading ! But I do not quite see how it is to be managed ; I shall wait at least until you come.

" Apart, however, from all question of notation, the article is very charming and most refreshing. It has excited me and put me into a good mood, so that all I do for the next few days—no matter how far removed from music and singing—will be better done in consequence of the few minutes spent upon the *British Quarterly Review*. This is one of the best results, I think, of human intercourse. A mind original, fresh, active, independent, always affects other minds healthfully, let the subject matter of their converse be this or that or what it may. The knowledge one gets by reading and talk is a great thing, but always associated with the communication of this knowledge there are fine spiritual influences which have a value of their own, distinct from that of the knowledge conveyed, and of such influences none stand more in need than teachers, whose efficiency depends on the freshness of their own thought and feeling.

" Last night I heard Jenny Lind sing in the 'Creation' ; surely no man ever felt more deeply than Haydn the glory of sunshine, the majesty of an 'August sunrise.' It was pleasant to hear this singer and that, but I forgot Sims Reeves and everybody else in thinking of Haydn and the Inventor of Haydn and of all music. I never heard the 'Creation' before.—Yours most truly,

HANNAH E. PIPE."

[From Dr. Vaughan, in regard to the proposed article on Mendelssohn which appeared in June 1859 :—]

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“ MANCHESTER, December 22, 1857.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I think it very probable that if you prepare a paper on the subject, and within the space you mention, I should be at liberty to avail myself of it. But it would not be before our May number. The sooner you could send me the paper, however, conveniently, the better.

“ Myself and the rest of us, in starting the *British Quarterly*, pledged ourselves to do our best for it at seven guineas a sheet. This is still our return for our service, and if I adopt your paper, of course it will be with that understood acknowledgment for it.—Yours very truly, ROBERT VAUGHAN.”

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“ LONDON, November 15, 1861.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I am very glad to see your handwriting once more. I have several books sent me on Congregational Psalmody which I should be very glad to send to you, if you would undertake to write an article on that subject, introducing what you may wish to say in favour of Mr. Curwen’s system of teaching, at your discretion. The topic is one that may be made interesting as well as instructive, and in your hands I have no doubt it would be so. Your paper on Mendelssohn was read with much pleasure, and we should be glad to have some such strain again.

“ The State-Educationists have gone long since where I cannot follow them.

“ Let me hear from you again as soon as may be, though I cannot make room for your paper in our next, all being

arranged for that number. But I should like to have your paper of a sheet or a sheet and a half by the first week in March.—Yours very truly,

R. VAUGHAN.

“P.S.—My poor Hungarians you see are still in trouble. But are they not men of the right stuff?”

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“LONDON, November 29, 1861.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—I have to-day sent off the parcel of books for you. By the first week in March I shall hope to receive an article from you in your best manner.—Yours very truly,

R. VAUGHAN.”

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“LONDON, March 5, 1862.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I like your paper much. It is gone to the printer as you sent it, though the space I had reserved for it was the exact twenty-four pages, and the overplus paper and print I shall have to give to that grateful personage the public.

“I like your idea of a Handel monograph, such as you did on Mendelssohn, and will very gladly reserve a sheet and a half for that purpose, to appear in our July number.—Yours very truly,

R. VAUGHAN.”

R. VAUGHAN to J. MILLS.

“LONDON, March 13, 1862.

“MY DEAR SIR.—I have read your hit at Towle with much gusto; the fellow is a renegade dissenter!

“If you can make way with the Handel, do. I will wait

until the end of April for you to feel your way with the subject, and hoping that you may be able to promise me the paper by the 12th of June at latest.—Yours very truly,

“R. VAUGHAN.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“NANTWICH, July 5, 1863.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your letter. Be assured I do not lose an iota of the true friendly feeling shown in its concluding sentences. I cannot afford not to gather up all the kindly intention of yourself and one or two other friends, but I beg you will not let the small or no chance there is of immediate results be a fret or trouble to you. With my own faculties wide awake, and knowing that you, and other good eyes and ears are open, I shall bide my time, having somewhat better grounds than Mr. Micawber for the cheerful faith that something will some day ‘turn up,’ though I cannot quite forget how I was turned upon during the last critical winter by those who should have best known that I was worthy of a generous support.

“We are building a large bank here, which the directors seem anxious that I should occupy. They know my mind, however, and I may escape within twelve months. If not so, I shall ‘cut my way out,’ and go in quest of breath and elbow-room to some large city—probably London.

“You must have greatly enjoyed your Lake residence. It was the scene of our marriage tour, and Isabella has touching sentimental associations therewith. The direction of this year’s holiday is a subject of deep cogitation with us just now. In this matter, as in Yankee politics, we have both Northern and Southern sympathies, and find a distracting balance of reasons.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN MILLS.”

1863.—The business of the bank had by this time so prospered and enlarged that the directors decided to build new premises in the centre of the

town. The advent of the railway, increase of population, and the erection of shoe manufactories—even “Townshend House” being converted into a ready-made clothing manufactory (ghost of King James!)—effected a great change, and no longer had nervous ladies need to fear being noticed as they went in or out of their bank—everybody was too busy; the ancient aroma had fled! For some time we had both been—what shall I say?—hankering after the flesh-pots? Anyway, we felt that it was time, for the children’s sake as well as for our own, to seek a wider sphere. Besides, we could not bear the idea of living in Nantwich in any other house.

Mr. Mills had been in communication with a London bank, and had also been offered the management of a bank in the south-west. In the following letter he gives expression to some of the *pros* and *cons* in considering the question of going to London:—

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“August 1863.

“DEAR HODGSON,—Thanks for your kindly suggestions and counsel. I have decided against the opening offered to me in the south-west. . . . If I do not go to London I will stay in the breezy North; Liverpool is ‘in the air’ just now. Regarding London, the urgency of certain literary and musical friends, whom you wot of, is grateful as it is tempting—but might I not get drawn into a vortex in that line that would interfere with the stern demands of duty to a bank? Had I,



LLYN-Y-CAI (THE LAKE SHUT IN). FROM THE GULLY.

[To face p. 291.

was wonderful ! I had gathered from his "Ode"¹ the idea of a "plumbless dark" that never reflected the sunshine ; but it was noontide, and suddenly one corner caught, for a short time, a glint of sunshine. "The eye of God ! the eye of God !" whispered he, and we sat in quiet awe ; then, when it had gone, rose and walked quietly down.

" LLYN-Y-CAI.

O quiet Llyn-y-Cai !
 Is it from earth or sky
 Thou winnest this great depth of calm ?
 Whether, down in the hollow there,
 Of Father Idris' wrinkled palm,
 There is some pulse-beat of the love
 Which holds thee up from saints below,
 And wards the gusts that roar above
 From ruffling of a face so fair,
 How can I know ?
 Or whether, all athirst for light,
 Like one with sleepless lust of lore,
 Thou, never breaking, gaze away
 From searching the blue deeps of day
 Or lusted labyrinths of night,
 Hast chanced to look into God's eye,
 So can be troubled never more,
 O tell me, Llyn-y-Cai !

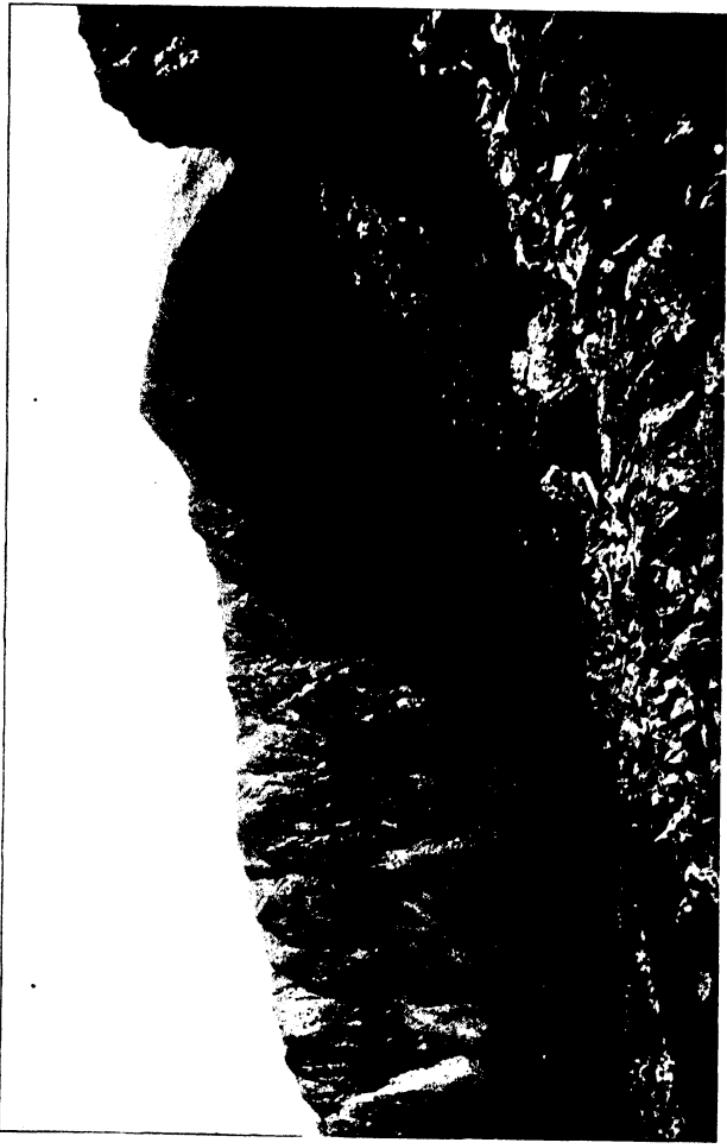
But I yearn and speak in vain,
 For the pure and plumbless dark,
 Which gives no answering hue
 To the Zenith's living blue,

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 27.

Nor the slant sun's yellow stain,
Heeds not nor hears me. Hark !
How the words in echoes die
Up the sheer cliffs to the sky,
While thou dreamest as before ;
And I, standing on thy shore,
Will question thee no more,
Sphinx of waters, Llyn-y-Cai !

For no scarred memories of the Past
With peace can shut us in,
As these torn cliffs, thy guardians vast,
Shut thee, O tranquil Llyn !”

Remembrance of that time is always as that of having been to a solemn cathedral service, and listened to an unseen organ played upon by no earthly fingers. Once, years after, it chanced that I strolled alone into a Catholic church in Amiens, and sat down to rest ; the light was dim, almost dark, save in the end around and above the altar. Suddenly the pealing tones of the organ startled me, as they came reverberating along the lofty roof ; then sweet, chanting chorister voices took up their parts, and from some mysterious unseen heights there dropped clearest flute-like tones. Then all was still, and a faint rustle of robes behind the screen told of the departure of priests and choir. As I went out I saw just two or three other figures also quietly leaving. That night I wrote home, “I have been to-day to ‘Llyn-y-Cai,’ ” and told him all about it.



LILYNSKI-CAL.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NANTWICH, October 7, 1863.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad Mrs. Mills gave you her little story of our run over Cader. You will remember our first run over him, supported by potent potations of the spirit rum, with hard-boiled eggs *ad lib.*, and the breaks in the sea of cloud below us, with glints of lake and valley below. Of Llyn-y-Cai we speak not much, but think the more, till we can go there again to worship with a thunder of thrice-echoed psalms. I have often felt all that you say about North Wales; I feel at home everywhere there but in the hotels.

"Mr. Ellis, from whom I have a kind note to-day in reply to a letter from me, tells me that you go next week into your 'exile.' I hope a little experience of it will relieve it of that character. By this post I send the current *Bankers' Magazine*, the first article in which is mine. Be gentle, arch-economist! —Yours faithfully,

J. MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"October 1863.

"DEAR HODGSON,—The die is cast! The Alliance Bank is desirous of establishing two branches, one in Liverpool and one in Manchester. I have undertaken to open the latter on the 1st of next January. I shall have to a large extent the free hand for which I have wished. We are both well content to return to Lancashire, and more than content with the prospect of living near to Alexander—in Bowdon; he being there settles our choice of situation. He, of course, rejoices 'mightily,' he says. I have no time to-day for more; but I wished you to know at once of our destination.—Yours,

"J. MILLS."

1864.—When, in 1852, Mr. Mills went to Nantwich, the district bank there was, from causes need-

less to specify, in low water, with only one or two small sub-branches. After twelve years' work he had the satisfaction of leaving it in first-rate and rapidly growing condition. Market Drayton and Crewe soon became independent branches, instead of sub-branches, and, best of all, he was able to say that during the whole period he had not made "a penny of bad debt!"

That he carried with him the esteem and goodwill of the community, was evidenced by the presentation to him of a fine bronze and marble clock and a silver epergne, on each being engraved the following :—

"Presented to JOHN MILLS, Esqre.
By his friends in
Nantwich, Market Drayton, Sandbach, and Crewe,
As a token of their esteem, founded on their
intercourse with him for twelve years, as
Manager of the District Bank in those towns.
May 1864."

The subscription was limited to one pound, and the most gratifying element to Mr. Mills was the large number of smaller spontaneous subscriptions from farmers in every part of the district.

It was not without pain that we bade good-bye to so many good friends, with some of the closest of whom, however, we kept in touch, and with whom we exchanged pleasant visits. To the older of our six children it was a terrible grief to leave the old

house and garden, and it took a long time to reconcile them to their new surroundings. Had Mr. Mills only lived another year his heart would have rejoiced to know that the Liberals had become strong enough to purchase the "old bank" for conversion into a Liberal Club.

When we left, the ancient cotton-mill stood silent and empty, there being "no cotton" to supply it; the building, however, still stands, and, oddly enough, was in 1874 again restored to its primeval and natural use, the grinding of corn, for which purpose it was built five centuries ago.

PART IV
BIOGRAPHICAL—*continued*

BOWDON

CHAPTER I

So it came to pass that 1864 found us settled at Bowdon, Cheshire—a place so widely known that, save for the benefit of distant readers, description would seem superfluous.

Bowdon lies about eight to ten miles south of Manchester. Even had not Mr. Ireland been living there, the fact that it was situated upon a hill was enough to decide our choice of a locality. The highest point is not more than two to three hundred feet above sea-level, but its peculiar position—in the centre of a great plain, rising gently from the valley of the Mersey on the north, and of the Bollin on the south—gives to it an unusual appearance of elevation and a command of extensive and varied views from every side. The ancient town of Altrincham skirts the foot of the north-east side.

We again experienced a sensation of a curious reversal of environment. At Nantwich, a spacious house and an ideal garden, but the contraction and dearth of intellectual life natural to a small town, just, by help of rail and steam, rousing itself out of a century's lethargy; here, a highly rented house,

which seemed in comparison like a sentry-box—the expansion and the compensation, both physical and mental, being found outside our own boundary.

Beautiful Dunham Park lay near, as yet unprofaned by builders' touch. We never wearied of walking up to the Parish churchyard, to look down upon the gently undulating bosky Vale Royal, with Rostherne Church tower in the distance, then skirting the hill westward through the Park on to St. Margaret's, to find to the north a different, and even more extended outlook.

Here, also, we found schools—Mr. Meiklejohn's for the boys, Miss Gregson's for the girls; a Congregational Church close by, then under the pastorate of the Rev. H. Griffith, who was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Mackennal, whose teaching and guidance has been one of the richest and most valued experiences of our lives, and those of our children; a literary circle, with Alexander Ireland for centre; a musical circle, and a financial—or rather "economic science" circle—all vital, earnest, and growing, and ready to give a warm welcome to any one who was in sympathy with, and could help them in any degree.

It really was as though, after having for a long time floated pleasantly at the head of some beautiful inland fiord, we, weighing anchor, had sailed out into the bracing atmosphere and rushing current of a broad, tidal river! Mr. Mills' keen enjoyment of

such opportunities of intercourse as he could snatch from the arduous task of creating a new banking business, told how greatly he had missed this element in his late life. In a journal written about this time, he says, "Met and had a talk with Alexander, *de omnibus rebus*; these greetings on the dusty highways of life, how refreshing to the troubled traveller! Thank God for alleviating friendship and sympathy!"

Truly the creation of a new bank proved to be an arduous task! The desolation of the Cotton Famine, of which he had written¹ in the autumn of 1862, still hung over the country; factories were yet empty and silent, and the people, hungry, and still patiently waiting for the end of the American Civil War.

In 1865 Mr. Jevons was appointed Professor of Logic at Owens College, and soon sympathy of views, and of disposition also, drew them much together, and their intercourse deepened the interest felt by both in economic questions.

The failure of Overend & Gurney in 1866 tried even the older banks, and to a new one was a terrible strain. In a note to Dr. Hodgson, Mr. Mills says, "We shall weather the storm, but 'Black Friday' was a day to be remembered!" Here I, too, can recall how, when sorely pressed, my husband would come in, throw off coat and

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 40.

hat, and turning into the drawing-room, shut the door and sit down to his organ. Tea waiting, the children, impatient, would say, "We'll fetch father!" "No, no," I would say, "wait till he comes; he is worried, and will soon be better." Presently he would emerge, and sit down with us, tired perhaps, but soothed, cheerful, and ready to join in our chatter, attuned to the fireside atmosphere so dear to him. How often I blessed the time when I made him buy that instrument!

There was little leisure during the next few years for writing of poetry; indeed from this period up to 1872 most of his work was in contributing to the discussion of Finance and Political Economy. In October 1866, he read before the Economic Section of the National Social Science Meeting in Manchester, a paper entitled "The Bank Charter Act and the Late Panic," which excited much discussion and led to a short correspondence with John Stuart Mill, of which only one complete letter remains:—

J. S. MILL to J. MILLS.

"AVIGNON, November 16, 1866.

"DEAR SIR,—I have only just received your letter of the 15th in reply to mine. Your pamphlet reached me by the same post; my answer is therefore too late for the purpose for which you requested it. I am the more sorry for this, as you have thought it right to mention in a note that you had been told I had changed the opinion which you quoted from

the last edition of my 'Political Economy,' and I should have been glad if you had mentioned such a statement, you should have been able to contradict it. I hold to the passage you quoted in every respect; it still expresses my opinion as correctly as it did when I first wrote it.—I am faithfully,

"J. S. MILL."

With the exception of articles and letters in the *Examiner*, and occasionally in the *Bankers' Magazine* and the *Economist*, and those already mentioned, the most important of his economic papers were written for the Manchester Statistical Society—the first in 1867–68—Mr. Langton of the Manchester and Salford Bank being then President. Further papers followed, the last being Mr. Mills' Inaugural Address in the first year of his Presidency.

Some further correspondence here will best continue the story:—

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"BUXTON, August 1866.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are staying here hoping that by the help of fine air Amy may soon recruit; I propose to return to Bowdon in about a week.

"I am glad you are going to Nottingham to the British Association; you know so many of the savant tribe that the visit will bring you many pleasant recognitions. I hope to serve usefully afterwards in letting you down gently to the common earth, and shall myself profit by receiving at second-hand all the new theories and facts with which you will be charged to the muzzle. My own mind after long activity and

excitement is in a lazy and relaxed condition, craving some toleration from your perservid faculties.

"I read the amusing brochure you mention, 'Profits and Panics,' and can vouch for the truth of much of it. I wish to say something somewhere about the nonsense lately talked to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the Chamber of Commerce, but don't know exactly how to set about it just now.

"*'Ecce Homo'* must be a failure from your point of view. It is so from mine, though in a different way.—Yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"THORNFIELD, BOWDON, January 6, 1867.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Cordial New-Year's greetings and the best of wishes for you and yours.

"We have had two or three pleasant days with our admirable friend Miss Pipe, though the cares and toils of balance-time for me cut down the days woefully, and indeed resolved them into a few moments of each night. When she sees you she will probably tell you that she heard Mr. Cameron (who was in great monologic feather) describe Unitarians as 'hapless people who for the most part straying from the rock of verily, verily, have wandered into infinite quicksands of peradventure.'

"Thanks for the slip letter to the *Spectator*. One sighs for your poor victim, as one hears the crunch of his bones in your grip. I suspect that in this unfortunate business there has been more of philosophic than religious intolerance. It is difficult to suppose Grote and Mill working with the straitest sect in theology. If it were so one would have to read Mill's 'Treatise of Liberty' in a new and puzzling light.

"I have been leading off a discussion on the Education Question in the Literary Society, as you will see from the enclosed, and had to get through a good hour's quick talking. My question was proposed before the issue of the Education Aid Society's Bill, but finding it in my way I was compelled to tackle it. I declared for National compulsory and unsectarian, and joined issue with the new Bill under the last head. Some

of the proposers were present, and did their best, but with little success. I was of course between two fires from the Voluntaries and the new Bill people, but carried the vote by a considerable majority. I noticed your letter to the *Examiner* on the subject, and made use of it.

"If you have access to the *Economist*, look first at the leading article, 29th December, on Fowler's pamphlet, and then read my letter in yesterday's paper. I am bound to nurse my little slip of laurel in such weather.—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

From this date Mr. Mills once more entered into the arena of the Education Question *re* Forster's proposed Bill, Mr. Hadfield and Mr. Baines in the *Leeds Mercury* fighting for the Voluntaries, Mr. Mills replying in the *Examiner* in defence of unsectarianism, &c., up to 1870. When Forster's Bill was carried, by means of compromise and the disloyalty of weak-kneed Nonconformists, it was a great disappointment to Mr. Mills; but once the Bill was passed, he, deeply conscious of the urgent necessity of a National system of education, retired from further public controversy. In writing to a friend he says, "We must now all do our best to get the most benefit possible from the working of this sadly mutilated Act, but, some day, sooner or later—perhaps not in my time—the whole battle of religious liberty in the schools will have to be fought over again under a hundred-fold more difficult and complicated conditions, and the Nonconformists will be hoist with their own petard!"

Surely a prophetic utterance, for now, in 1898,

we are in the midst of the inevitable struggle (may it be the last !) for a system of education that shall be open to all, without hurt to any man's conscience.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"BOWDON, September 1867.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I start on Saturday for a week's ramble with my brother-in-law, George Petrie, and may afterwards perhaps get a week with the Meiklejohns on the Clyde. That worthy injector of erudition has just left me, and is away to Scotland to-morrow. Last night his Rose-Hill Boys (old and young) held a festive meeting, and with great *éclat* presented him with a testimonial in the form of a handsome silver service. Service for service, a mere elementary definition of commerce, but I believe some sentiment was imported into the post-prandial spouting. Meiklejohn deserves the golden opinions no less than the silver service.—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"THORNFIELD, September 18, 1867.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—After a seven days' seclusion in the most retired dales of Westmoreland and Cumberland, beyond the pale of the newspaper phase of civilisation, I emerged from the interminable defile of Longsleddle, and entered Kendal on Saturday evening, hungry for a penny print. The first that came to hand was the *Standard*, and almost the first item that 'caught my eye' was, to my great amusement, the record of my versatile and ubiquitous friend, Dr. Hodgson, having repeated the feat of which I was the privileged witness last year in Hertfordshire, of infusing into the bovine rustic mind a few advanced modern ideas—'Not harsh nor crabbed, &c.'

"It is a singular fancy this of yours, but Orpheus and Arion

were never more successful than you in putting a temporary soul into inanimate nature. Go on and prosper. Mr. Disraeli has turned the country gentlemen into Radicals ; it may be your mission to convert the farmers into economists and educationalists ! When you have succeeded in this, I will come in as a new Ovid to sing these new metamorphoses.

" My journey was made in the company of my brother-in law, George Petrie, and our object was to visit the un-hackneyed lake and mountain regions lying west and east of the beaten tourist track.

" It was a glorious tramp, in spite of chronic wet feet and some awkward adventures in the way of losing paths and finding bedless quarters. It has pretty well completed one's knowledge of that wonderful region, and will remain a pleasant memory for life. I thought often of you, and wished you were there.—Ever truly yours,

" JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

" MANCHESTER, October 30, 1867.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have looked up the note to your lecture, and find it very important and suggestive, and I shall try to get Bailey's book. I can make very slow progress with my paper, as my little evening leisure is continually broken in upon, and I dare not sacrifice the sleep which is a vital necessity to me.

" Just now I am concerned with special precautions in the bank day and night during this humiliating period of rowdyism and social panic, and am becoming knowing in revolvers, and have organised defensive forces like the other banks. I am told that a large proportion of the people of this city are now armed. The revolvers have made a revolution in peaceful Manchester. A good deal of this seems to be babyish, and we should be 'in arms' in a different sense.

" We are glad you have your eye on Amy.¹ You can

¹ Our eldest daughter, Amy ("Filia"), who has inherited much of her father's temperament, was a favourite with both Dr. and Mrs. Hodgson, and often visited them—first at Bournemouth and later at Bonaly Tower

influence her for good, and your clear appreciation of her mental character will help your friendly purpose.

“What does your political economy say to Garibaldi? Poor grand old hero! He must die!—Ever yours,

“JOHN MILLS.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“BOWDON, December 20, 1867.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will be glad to hear that I have not argued for any inevitableness in the periodicity of panics. It is true I have used the remarkably uniform series of panics in the present century as particulars in the process of induction on which I build my theory of cycles of credit, but I have attached no superstitious importance to the mere decennial period. Act on the moral source, and you may not only lengthen the cycle, but diminish the intensity of the crisis, even if you cannot stave off collapses altogether, of which last there is at present little hope.

“If I had made too much of the decade, my theory would have been decadent before its growth.

“The meeting was a very successful one, and I had every reason to be gratified.—Ever yours,

“JOHN MILLS.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“BOWDON, December 30, 1867.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your wish for a happy Christmas for us was fairly fulfilled, if a merry family party may be considered to realise your wish. Be the New Year happy to you and yours.

“If you are coming to the Educational Conference on the 15th (which by all means you should do), pray give us the

—delighting the children in their rambles on the Pentlands by inventing and telling them “Quinkey” tales that they never forgot. She sat at her Gamaliel’s feet, gratefully and eagerly imbibing wisdom and guidance from the lips of one who never begrudged time or trouble to help in the smallest details of the meaning of words, correctness of speech, or accuracy of thought.

pleasure of your company at our house. We can then be at leisure to talk over credit cycles and many other matters, and try my tobacco and my new theory simultaneously. The latter was emphatically endorsed by Jevons at the meeting, but that may have arisen from the benevolent mood of mind natural to a man on the brink of matrimony.¹—Yours ever,
“JOHN MILLS.”

It was a great pleasure to Mr. Mills to find, in the Bowdon musical circle alluded to, Mrs. Louis Behrens, his friend of sixteen years before. She was as enthusiastic a musician as ever, and at her house, at her matinées, and in evenings with Brahms or Beethoven, we met many well-known musicians and leading members of Charles Hallé's staff, amongst them Strauss, Jacoby, Risegari Bauerkeller, all of them old violinists at Hallé's; De Jong (flautist), Dr. Hiles, and Herr Fredrich Unger (pianist)—a real genius—and many fine amateur singers, ladies especially, Mr. Mills often taking his part in the vocal music.

There was another choral society in Bowdon of which he was also a member, where the magnificent soprano of Miss Sallie Leese² was often blended with his in duets. He also took, in 1868, the post of honorary organist at the Congregational Church and the training of the choir, in which he made much use of the tonic sol-fa. On the occasion of a great festival of the united Congregational choirs of

¹ Professor Jevons married Miss Taylor, daughter of Mr. Taylor, one of the proprietors of the *Manchester Guardian*, early in 1868.

² “Vox Humana,” page 9.

the district in 1869, he wrote (for sight-reading) a short sanctus, "Holy, Holy, is the Lord," which was afterwards incorporated in the Tonic books. With all this, crowned by Hallé's concerts, which we attended for thirty years, there was no lack of outside musical pabulum; yet his subtlest and deepest pleasure was, after all, found at home with piano or harmonium, especially when his brother James came over. It was a treat to watch those two conning over some new composition, or finding new beauties in the old masters; James, short-sighted and spectacled, peering close to the score as he played, John walking up and down, now and then exclaiming, "Grand!" "Fine!" then at some special passages laughing outright with glee, and so on, James, fine musician and expert as he was, generally meekly submitting to the elder brother's more vigorous demonstrations.

Our children were not specially musical, but one¹ daughter had a beautiful voice of a rare sympathetic "timbre," which blended well with her father's baritone. On one occasion we were at an at-home in Bowdon, where Ford Madox Brown was present. After much fine musical display, instrumental and vocal, Italian roulades and German songs, Helen went up to the piano, and to her father's accompaniment sang one or two

¹ This daughter and her sister Isabel were married on the same day, each to a son of Mr. W. O'Hanlon of Bowdon.

simple ballads. When she had finished "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true," Ford Madox Brown, with tears in his eyes, whispered to a friend, "Delicious! That's music!" and afterwards said to our host (Mr. Ireland), "I would like to hear that again, but not in a crowd—when I come quietly to see you."

Shortly before we came to Bowdon the "Round-about," a literary club, had been formed, Mr. Ireland, Mr. Horatio Micholls, and Professor Meiklejohn being the founders. It was to consist of twelve members, Mr. Mills being elected as the twelfth. Among the first members were Mr. Ireland, Mr. Meiklejohn, Mr. Micholls, Mr. Leese (father of Sir Joseph Leese, now Recorder of Manchester), Mr. Mudd, Mr. Mills, Mr. John Watson (a well-known naturalist, whose collection of butterflies was considered the finest in the North of England, and of great value), Dr. Morell, Mr. Swanwick, Mr. Fleming, Mr. Marsland, and Mr. Phillips. Of these are still living, Mr. Mudd, Mr. Micholls (in London), and Mr. Leese, who is now eighty-four years of age, and who sent me lately the following note from Southport :—

J. LEENE to MRS. J. MILLS.

"SOUTHPORT, January 15, 1899.

"DEAR MRS. MILLS,—After the 'Roundabout' was formed Mr. Ireland became the special providence that watched over it, and inspired it with its remarkable qualities of geniality, and

its unrestrained liberty of expression of opinion. It would be well if the various Christian communities would conduct their controversies with the same kindly tolerance as did our 'Roundabout' in its often exciting discussions. With best wishes for the future, and happy memories of the past.—Yours, &c.,

JOSEPH LEESE."

As vacancies occurred, of course, new members were elected, Mr. Waterson, Mr. Sampson, Sir Joseph Lee, Mr. Fairchild (of New York, but then residing in Manchester), John Thompson, Walton Gillibrand, David Holt, and others, whose names are too well known in Manchester to need comment here. They met for dinner once a month at each other's houses in turn, the host of the evening being free to invite a guest; and zest was sometimes added to the evening by the presence of some notable literary friend of Mr. Ireland's—Charles Cowden Clarke, "Verax," T. R. Wilkinson, E. J. Broadfield, Colonel Shaw (American Consul), Dr. Hodgson, Professor Jevons, and more than once Robert Chambers, who paid frequent visits to his cousin, Mrs. Alexander Mills, and spent much time on those occasions with Mr. Ireland.

A correspondence that ensued directly after the death of Mr. Ireland between Mr. Mills and Mr. Fairchild, who had returned to New York, may prove here to be of more interest than any further description of mine, especially as no adequate life of Mr. Ireland has been written:—

J. MILLS to H. J. FAIRCHILD.

"NORTHWOLD,
ALTRINCHAM, February 7, 1895.

"DEAR MR. FAIRCHILD,—Let me thank you, as I cordially do, for your thoughtful consideration in sending me two numbers of the New York *Evening Post* containing Mr. M. Conway's remembrances of our dear old friend Alexander Ireland. Most interesting and warm-hearted, they seem to embody emotions of one's own that were difficult to express. I have myself been stricken, as it were, quite dumb since the death of my special old comrade, and could not carry out any impulses to speak of our fifty years of close and confidential intercourse—a friendship of the truest ideal type. I have heard many sympathetic words on the subject, and the papers have done full justice to Alexander Ireland's public personality; but I must wait in vain for the fit and faithful word that tells the full significance of the relations which seem to have held for us the framework of the last half-century together. The key-note of those relations was early pronounced, as I find that in May 1846 I appear to have addressed to my then new friend the lines¹ set forth on the enclosed detached slip, on the occasion of a gathering of his friends to celebrate his thirty-fifth birthday. You will not fail to recognise in the lines traces of emotional experience which at that and later periods were not uncommon with him, and the causes of which were usually confided to me.

"With me you will think it strange that, amidst all the memorial notices that have appeared, not a solitary word seems to have been said about the Roundabout Club, of which Alexander Ireland was, as you know, the recognised Doyen and Patriarch. And yet I always think that it was the scene where he appeared to the greatest advantage, and where he was usually serenely happy. You, and all the old R's, will remember with ever renewed relish, but with a chastened sense of enjoyment, the fine flavour and gusto of his jokes and stories, some of them crusted with welcome repetition, and

¹ "Vox Humana," page 24.

some of them pungent with a touch of innocent wickedness. And if, as I hear is not unlikely, a fuller life of him should appear, the Roundabout should not, cannot be forgotten.

“I trust you are keeping well, and coming to England some day.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN MILLS.”

H. J. FAIRCHILD to J. MILLS.

“56 WEST FIFTY-FIFTH STREET,
NEW YORK, March 4, 1895.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—When I first heard of the death of our old friend Mr. Ireland, I at once thought of you as the one who would be the one nearest and closest to him, and I thank you most sincerely for your letter received a fortnight since, enclosing a copy of the lines addressed to him nearly fifty years ago, and more than nineteen years before he and I had ever met.

“My first impulse was, both as an American and an old neighbour of Mr. Ireland’s, to write a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* or the *City News*, giving some of my recollections of our old friend, but I knew that Moncure Conway, whom I had once met at Mr. Ireland’s, was in New York, and felt that he was much more competent to treat the subject than myself. Mr. Conway, moreover, was a frequent contributor both to the *Guardian* and the *Evening Post*, and I accordingly wrote to Mr. Conway suggesting that an article from him would be most timely and appropriate, and offering to render any assistance in my power. To this Mr. Conway replied promptly in the kindest manner, and the two admirable papers which I sent you were the result. But a paper which I furnished Mr. Conway, and which he told me he had hoped to make use of, was unfortunately delayed in reaching him until his articles were in type and proofs submitted, so that his papers were devoted largely to the intimacy of Mr. Ireland with Emerson, while I had wished to dwell on the unwearied kindness of Mr. Ireland to Americans in general, and his unfailing interest in America. As my paper was returned I shall enclose it with this, to show you what I had proposed to say, and if any points in

it should appear to you worthy of preservation, I shall be very happy to place it entirely at your service.

"If I ever visit England again, which is doubtful (I have only been in Manchester once and for a few days during nine years), depend upon it I shall call to see you, and meantime believe me, as always, faithfully yours,

"H. J. FAIRCHILD.

"RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. ALEXANDER IRELAND OF
MANCHESTER.

"My first acquaintance with Mr. Ireland began in 1865, when, with a friend from New York, who had a note of introduction to him, I called upon him. A few years later I became a neighbour of Mr. Ireland in Bowdon, Cheshire, where I lived near him for over fifteen years, and where, through the partiality of Mr. Ireland and other friends, I had the good fortune to be admitted to the 'Club' referred to in the columns of the *Guardian*. This, however, was far from being a Club in the ordinary sense of the word. It was styled the 'Roundabout Club,' because its monthly meetings were held at the houses of its different members in turn, Mr. Ireland being not only the senior member and the Chairman, but easily the leader in conversation, anecdote, and reminiscences. The reviews and leading magazines, including the best American, were taken by the Club; discussion of the contents of these publications, as well as other topics of the day, furnished the basis of our evening talks, which midnight often found unfinished, and some of which, profitable and delightful as they were, will never be forgotten by those who were so happy as to have taken part in them. Of one of the leading Manchester clubs, also, Mr. Ireland was a regular frequenter, and the well-known 'corner table' was never complete without his presence. In all the places where he was known his loss has left a void which never can be filled. Friend of John Bright and Emerson, opposed to slavery, staunch supporter of the Union cause during the war, he welcomed Americans to his home and heart; and one of the last articles

he wrote was on the death of Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose books he loved. His library was full of American books, from Margaret Fuller (with a complete set of the 'Dial') to the present day, and his favourite anthologies were 'Dana's Household Book of Poetry' (which he used to say John Bright always took with him into the country), and later Emerson's 'Parnassus.' His memory itself was amazing ; he could relate travels of forty or fifty years ago without forgetting the names of the smallest villages, and his heart was as large and true as his industry, kindness, and love of his fellow-men were inexhaustible.

H. J. FAIRCHILD.

"THE H. B. CLAFLIN Co.,
NEW YORK, Jan. 5, 1895."

The Manchester Club, alluded to by Mr. Fairchild, was the "Clarendon." Of all who sat for years at that well-known "corner table," I know but one left—Mr. T. R. Wilkinson. Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Mills were friends before the latter came to Manchester; the tastes of both were literary, and their economic principles were in harmony. Mr. Wilkinson succeeded Mr. Langton as head of the Manchester and Salford Bank, and he also succeeded Mr. Mills in 1873 as President of the Statistical Society. He now resides at Knutsford, but he says it is too melancholy to go to the Clarendon—"There is no one left; yet the room is still crowded!"—Eheu!

CHAPTER II

FROM 1864 to 1874 was perhaps the fullest and most fruitful decade of Mr. Mills' life. Added to the conducting of the bank were contributions to the Statistical Society, consisting of the following papers: "On Credit Cycles, and the Origin of Commercial Panics" (December 1867); "On the Post-Panic Period, 1866-70" (March 1871); "On the Scope and Method of Statistical Inquiry, and on Some Questions of the Day" (November 1871), the last being the Inaugural Address on his succeeding Mr. Jevons as President. The National Education question, and the controversy already mentioned between Mr. Baines in the *Leeds Mercury*, in support of the Voluntaries, and the *Examiner*, in opposition—mostly carried on by Mr. Mills in letter and leader up to 1870—was very absorbing. Then the Alliance Bank having decided to give up its provincial branches, Mr. Mills, who in Manchester had been very successful, and felt that he had in hand the nucleus of a larger business, drew up a scheme for a new bank, to be called the "Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank," which he laid before certain friends. A strong Board was formed, and in 1872

he had the satisfaction of handing over to them a small but well-organised and successful business already profitable. In January 1872 the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank was opened, the Chairman being Mr. William Armitage, whose name was in itself a tower of strength in securing public confidence, and whose unvarying kindness to and support of Mr. Mills in all difficulties, was unfailing and precious. Both men thoroughly esteemed and trusted each other, and the passing years only served to deepen a mutual affection. Not long after, our second daughter, Margaret, married William, the third son of Mr. Armitage.

After this little *résumé* there may opportunely follow a further selection of letters.

In 1876 Mr. Jevons left Manchester for permanent residence in London.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"SCARBOROUGH, September 13, 1868.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind note of the 11th inst., and two separate papers, have been sent here after me. . . . I calculated on the little scrimmage in the *Daily News* coming under your eye in the ordinary course, and did not like to bore you with a repetition of it. After what you had told me I did not doubt as to the identity of my censor. The affair has brought me letters from various persons, who are studying in the same direction.

"You still speak of your fear that I should be mistaken by 'hasty and prejudiced readers' as an advocate of fatalism, &c.

But I never doubted that I should be mistaken by such people, and my whole care in that regard was to reduce such error to a minimum by everywhere fencing my position with special cautions. I was not content with letting my meaning be 'real, but not very patent,' and having done all this, would it have been right for me to suppress what I believe to be theoretically true and practically important, merely because of the wrong-headedness which you yourself recognise? God knows, it is little I can do for my fellows (far less than I once dreamt of!), but with the bow in my hand for once, with the arrow on the string, and a fair mark before me, shall I drop my hands because a foolish wind, for which I am not responsible, may blow the weapon away? That would be a poor story. Mr. Bailey's censure on my style is a far weightier matter, not only because I have a great respect for his opinion, but because, as the Devil says in Festus, 'Manner is a great matter.' Possibly the less severe subjects on which I have previously written may have permitted me to fall into habits of expression not well suited to economic matters; but is it quite essential that discussions of this nature should be conducted in such a washed-out and impersonal medium? It seems to me that, so long as the colour and the tone are not artificial, but come from within, and harmonise naturally with the thought, they will not be lets, but helps to the truly philosophic mind which recognises the relation between laws on the one side and facts and forms on the other, between Science abstract in the mind, and Science concrete in Nature. I am a little consoled by remembering the hearty approval given by you (whose opinion I equally respect) to the style of my 1866 pamphlet, which was certainly not less flowery than that of the 'Cycles.' However, I will do my best to be 'severe,' will grub up my garden, and plant an orchard, and if Nature will perversely make blossoms a prevenient condition of fruit, the intrusive gawds shall be utilised in some other way. I will write poetry in spring and summer, political economy in autumn and winter!

"E. K. Blyth and family are here, and we have had nice walks.—Very truly,

"JOHN MILLS."

[A fine new organ of Mr. Mills' own scheming was erected in the Congregational Chapel, 1868 :—]

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"THORNFIELD, Bowdon, November 30, 1868.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Yes, all went well with the organ, and its player. It has been a great trouble, and is now as great a joy. It is lovely, it is grand ; it has the tenderness and delicacy of the feminine soul, the breadth and majesty of the male. A love ditty, and a Bach fugue (the latter somewhat of the nature of a credit cycle) seem equally native to it. Verily your sympathies are as positive as your creed is negative, and the first might almost redeem the last. How came you to think of the whistles in our conventicle ?

"As you had a hand in the Fox Memorial, I am glad my notice pleases you. Have you noticed how surely, though quietly, the new cycle is stealing into its second stage? The development is going on in the most exact and interesting way, all the features answering to my delineation. Jevons is watching it, and thinks with me.

"George Macdonald comes to us December 21 with sermons and lectures, the latter on 'Hamlet.' I should have wished to have a quiet talk with you when you were here.—
Yours ever,

JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—Our friend Alexander Ireland is about to build a house in Bowdon."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"BOWDON, January 17, 1869.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—When I last wrote you I did not say a word about your Cavour book, because, not then having read it (being, as you know, sorely pressed for time about the end of the year), I could not intelligently thank you. I have just finished reading it, and find myself wondering that

one should have got—after all one's reading on the subject—one's fast hold on the Irish Question from a foreign and dead statesman. You could not have done a more timely and effective thing than to reproduce Cavour's Essay at this moment, and I trust Gladstone will take a suitable occasion to give you the public thanks you deserve for what must seem to him like a strong auxiliary contingent arriving on the eve of a critical battle.

"I may perhaps stir your envy, jealousy, or deadly hatred, when I tell you that Miss Pipe has just passed a couple of days with us. Did ever any woman carry with her such an aspect of serene, self-controlled *power*—of the healthy equipoise of vital energies, dominated to that *apparently* (but only apparently) passionless calm by conscience and soul? Perhaps my girls, who are her mere devotees, have infected me with a little of their enthusiastic reverence.

"Look at a letter of Thorold Rogers' on 'Free Banking' in the *Star* of the 9th inst. He has been with me for some time to-day (18th) at the bank. . . . Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"BOWDON, February 7, 1869.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind note of 28th January was not received by me till Thursday evening last, on my return from Paris. . . . I do not know if you intended me to return the article from the *Scotsman*, but I do so, as you may not have another copy. It must be very gratifying and encouraging to you to find that your seasonable labours on Cavour's Irish article meet with such wide acceptance. You will, I think, hear much more of the matter yet.

"I have also to thank you for the copy of your sound and sensible lecture on the subject of Capital. It has often occurred to me that you are the man to do for England on the subject of Economics what Bastiat did in France. We want a medium between such minds as those of Mill, Ricardo, &c., and the minds of the million of half-thinkers which

become the *habitat* of prejudices and crotchets. If good Political Economy were popularised as it ought to be, neither Ruskin nor Pattersons would be so dangerous as they now are. J. E. T. Rogers could do something in this way, but he is immersed in ultra-radical politics. You are the man.

"I have been reading the first two volumes of Browning's 'The Ring and the Book,' and am overwhelmed with the power of the book. The subtlest elements of poetry and psychology are poured seething out of the brain-alembic, and both they and the recipient vessel must have time to cool before the product can be estimated as an *objet d'art*. My church organ is eloquent to day.—Ever yours, JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"BEN RHYDDING, YORKSHIRE,
April 11, 1869.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have come to this place for a little rest, and the sudden change from the late horrors of fog and snow to bright fine weather, gives quite a summer look to this delicious valley, and gives one the sensation of having been whisked away a thousand miles to some temple under a southern sun. I have time to think here of friends whom the preoccupations of home business allow small chance of speaking to even by post; and so of you and yours.

"You would observe that my anticipation as to the introduction of your Cavour book into the debate was well fulfilled, except that it was named by Mr. Bright, instead of Mr. Gladstone, as I hoped. The course of political events lately must have given you pleasure—all the more that you have contributed effective momentum to it. You will have learned doubtless that my house is stronger by a new feminine unit than it was some five weeks ago. Casting about for a name or names for the youngest, we have become unanimous in favour of these—'Esther Hodgson Mills,' always assuming that you do not object to our use of the second. . . . There are some sensible people here, but no celebrities such as usually haunt the place.—Yours, JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, July 2, 1869.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have this afternoon posted to the address at Dolgelly the Mendelssohn song. . . . Your other little commission is not so easily effected. Llyn-y-Cai is not to be taken down from a shelf, like the 'Sun of the Sleepless.' It has not been printed, and I believe there is only one copy in the world, and the subjectivities of the thing do not hold good for all the stages of a man's life. But, and in short, if you will take me in, and if I can steal two whole days within the next fortnight, I will try to reach you, and we will mount old Cader once more, and from the tarn itself take a 'drowsing draught' of poetry and water—a sort of hydropathy which suits my constitution well, however it may agree with you.—Ever yours,

J. MILLS."

[In view of candidature for the Chair of Political Economy at Edinburgh, Dr. Hodgson wrote to Mr. Mills for a testimonial :]

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, August 31, 1870.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have, as you see, obeyed gladly your behest, pocketed the modesty which you seem to think I carry amongst my impedimenta, have swelled myself to the vastest proportions possible, and send you the result, much chuckling within myself, with a humorous sense of great fun of *my* giving *you* a testimonial. This fine comedy acts like a tonic on my relaxed and weary system. . . . Seriously, I wish you success in seizing on the spare chair in Edinburgh, with a long and useful career (can you have a career in a chair?) therein. I have said honestly what I think of you, and can

only hope the hon. curators may attach more importance to my dignity of V.P. and author than I do myself.

"I have had a very kind letter from Bonamy Price about my 'Cycles,' which had been lent to him by Mr. Devey. I believe he is on the Continent now, or I would have made him known to the Edinburgh professor.—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—Thanks for 'Turgot,'¹ which I have read with great pleasure. You have done an act of justice to the dead and of service to the living."

J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

"MANCHESTER, November 6, 1871.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The *Scotsman* supplied me with a choice bit of succulent Sunday reading—food and tonic in the same dish, the solid meat and strong thoughts washed down with a flood of sparkling illustration, and helped to digest by a dash of bitter here and there, where Ruskin elicited your bark. Many thanks; your inaugural, so full of sympathy and deep feeling, is itself better than any of your arguments as a splendid reply to the snarlers at economists 'as having no souls, one-eyed flat-fish, etc.' A most propitious opening for your professional course; may all go well with you, and may your tillage bring ample reward for your labour.

"I, too, have had my little innings, having been elected to succeed Jevons as President of the Manchester Statistical Society. You would probably see, in the *Examiner* of Thursday, 2nd inst., a report of what I said on that occasion.

"Have you seen Jevons' 'Theory of Political Economy,' in which algebraic formulæ are largely employed in connection with pleasure and pain, &c.? I have the book to review for the *Guardian*. I enclose card for our sessional course. You will see Bonamy Price is to discuss the 'Theory of Rent,' on which he goes against Ricardo.—Accept warm congratulations, and believe me, ever yours most truly, JOHN MILLS."

¹ Dr. Hodgson's translation.

W. B. HODGSON to J. MILLS.

"EDINBURGH, November 30, 1871.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have read with great delight your masterly review of Professor Jevons' book in the *Economist*. I have not yet read the review of it in the *Examiner and Times*, so comparisons are at this moment impossible. I am struck by one sentence especially in your review, because it exactly expresses my own opinion. You say, 'We find less actual dissent from the old standard than we had anticipated.' It is the most usual tendency of ardent reformers in science—of men who think for themselves, and who, *in that sense*, are original—to fancy that they are more original, in *the other sense* of the word, than they really are. They magnify the differences, and underrate, perhaps ignore, the arguments. Jevons' doctrine of value is that of Whateley, Bailey, Bastiat, M'Leod, and, last and least, your present correspondent. I frankly adopt Jevons' assertion: 'I hold labour to be essentially variable, so that its value must be determined by the value of the produce, not the value of the producer, viz., that of the labourer.'

"There is no real difficulty about the cost of production and its connection with value if only you begin at the right end of the question; the whole thing lies in a nutshell, as Whateley has put it; he says (I do not quote the exact words): 'Men dive for pearls because they are valuable; pearls are not valuable because men dive for them.' Once grasp that proposition, and the difficulties vanish. The cost of production is in the long run the limit of production, and for an obvious reason, that is to say, that if the cost of production rise above the value, or the value fall below the cost of production, production will be discouraged and suspended, or perhaps abolished. To make cost of production, on the other hand, the regulation of value involves this absurdity, that, if you only increase the cost of production the value will rise accordingly, which is no more true than that, if you lessen the cost, the value will necessarily (and in the absence of competition) fall. But I must stop. Adam Smith, Ricardo, and De

Quincey, and J. S. Mill have unravelled the whole question. There is much that is admirable in Jevons' book, and you have done it full justice. I hope to see you before long in your new home, 'Northwold.'—Yours faithfully,

"W. B. HODGSON."

[Mr. Mills founded the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, and writes to his friend :—]

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, May 1, 1872.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will be glad to hear that the launch of the new bank is so far a great success. A large quantity of shares are applied for, and some of the best names in the city are in the list. To bring it to this point has been a great pull on one's energies. I feel as if I were crossing a turbid stream *between two banks*, and must for a time buffet the waves, however I may gasp for breath and pine for rest hereafter. Many thanks for your kind wishes.—Yours very truly,

J. MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NORTHWOLD," January 31, 1873.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is long since I wrote to you, and I hardly deserved the pleasure you gave me by your note of encouragement dated 19th inst., but you will acquit me of anything worse than weariness of mind and body, in letting slip day by day when I should have had vigour and self-command enough to write a few words to my friends. But few can really know the amount of hard work and anxiety involved in the organisation of a bank, and carrying it through times that are or threaten to be critical, such as the late autumn

and present winter. It is the combination of incessant and imperative labour with an exacting vigilance of outlook, and an overshadowing consciousness of *responsibility*, that makes the real wear and tear of brain and nerves, and consumes the life in a man. In an old and big bank that can bear down and sail over everything, good management is comparatively easy, momentum and acquired resource do so much ; but in a young bank good management is everything, and yet is not easy. But enough of this ; we are successful so far, and shall do our best.

" You mention Mr. C. Gairdner of Glasgow. I was introduced to him lately, and heard him speak without being able to give assent to his views. He and his friend Newmarch are trying to get the Bank Act altered to the extent of re-uniting the separate departments of issue and banking, and have been down here to move the Chamber of Commerce. If my mind had been more at leisure I should have written a paper for our Statistical Society, which has made me President for a second year, to show the fatal mischief involved in such a course. I suppose Newmarch and Gairdner said their best, and it seemed to me singularly weak. Perhaps I may be able to do something about it yet.—Ever yours,

JOHN MILLS."

W. B. HODGSON to J. MILLS.

" EDINBURGH, March 29, 1873.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have to thank you in the name of my class, as well as my own, for so kindly and promptly sending me a copy of your pamphlets. I have had your diagrams enlarged, and I am expounding your views to my class. Have you read Leyd's remarkable paper on the Bank Act in the *Statist* for December ? It is most elaborate. I am eager for Palgrave's paper, which is to appear in the March number. Do send me the *Guardian* with your article on the Debate ; it will be interesting to hear what Lowe has to say.—Yours,

" W. B. HODGSON."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“NORTHWOLD,’ June 4, 1874.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—This Thursday evening brings with it the first moment of leisure enabling me to say the word of cordial kindness and gratitude which has been craving to be said since we left ‘bonnie Bonaly’

“My wife will have told you of the agreeable stages of our journey homewards. The Scott country was, as you may suppose, deeply interesting to us, and we made the best use of our little time in seeing its Melrose, Dryburgh, and Abbotsford. I shall not forget, but I confess to having felt a certain pathetic commiseration for my younger self (long ago departed this life) that I did not see these places when I was a lad of fresh poetical emotions. Excuse this touch of egotism. The demon of financial hurry and care, which has done its best to smother all *that*, has me again in his grip, and I am grinding business again with the docility of a machine. Poetry is only the sand in the wheel, and must be resolutely swept away!—Ever yours,

“J. MILLS.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“MANCHESTER, July 15, 1875.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind note of the 30th June found me engulfed in my balance work, and the after-period has been one of continual anxiety and suspense, which left no mental leisure for letter-writing. . . . Alexander Ireland will probably have told you that during the late (if indeed it be the *late*) hurly-burly in commerce and finance, we have been fortunate enough to escape without losses. We cannot indeed escape without the losses which *follow* such an overturn of credit. If bad debts are avoided, business is much less active and profitable, and this affects everybody. The phenomena have indeed been very peculiar, and will supply food for much reflection when one gets a little out of the wash and eddy of

the stream. I think the plentiful reserve has saved us from the ultimate developments of panic—not by its being *used*, but by its being *present*. There is salvation in 3 per cent. as well as a ‘sweet simplicity’—indeed, it seems to inherit all the Gospel blessings. But now Capital seems to be awakening to a chill sense of how near it was to the break-neck brink, and it has for the moment retired from active life. The bill-brokers in London are rejecting some of the very finest paper—whether from timidity or impecuniosity, I know not. Imagination sees in all the solid world only a quicksand or a bog.

“O for a glimpse of the rosy glades of bonny Bonaly—‘The world forgetting, by the world forgot’! Herford has tried to drag me into a dismal logomachy, which I have laughed off for the present. Kind regards to all.—Ever yours,

JOHN MILLS.”

J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

“MANCHESTER, September 15, 1875.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your proposal to go to Conishead Priory and to Douglas was very seductive, but even before receiving your card to-day I knew it was my fate not to go there. Until the financial world is less disturbed, and the commercial world a little relieved from depression, I must not wander far afield.

“I was much struck and pleased with Mr. Smith’s paper. The subject is well-worn here, but he leaves on one’s mind an impression of completeness and efficiency of treatment very different from the common sketchy or crotchety performances. The misfortune is that such papers as his rarely reach the hands to which they would be most serviceable.

“I was urged to speak on the Standard Question at the Chamber of Commerce, but declined, and I only spoke at the Statistical, as being on my own ground there and entitled to my say. They are now again urging me to go to the Chamber, but I feel no vocation to a crusade, and they have not yet answered what I have already said.

“But what has the Cobden Club to do with circulating

Chernuschi? His views are in the very teeth of Cobden and his friend Chevalier. I have letters from Jevons and Bonamy Price on the matter, and we are all fairly unanimous. But in this city the double standard is being held out to the spinners and manufacturers like a piece of juicy meat on a prong before a hungry pack, and you may imagine how Oldham, Burnley, &c., bay and howl!—Yours very truly,

“JOHN MILLS.”

J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

“MANCHESTER, February 20, 1878.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been having some correspondence with Jevons, who, being now located in London, has opportunities of research which I have not; and he has come upon most extraordinary evidences that my Nineteenth-Century series of Credit Crises extends backwards through nearly the whole of the Eighteenth, in a continuous series—the average interval being about 10.3 years. I shall learn something more detailed and definite. Bonamy Price has sent me a copy of the privately printed correspondence between him and H. H. Gibbs, ex-Governor of the Bank of England, on the Bank of England Reserve. I forward it to you by book-post; please return when read. You will be amused with the racy way in which Gibbs puts down the assertions of Price.

“‘Verax’ has won golden opinions, and has proved a very timely monitor. With kindly regards to you all.—Ever yours,

“JOHN MILLS.”

W. B. Hodgson to J. Mills.

“BONALY TOWER, COLINTON, N.B.,
October 1, 1878.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Easily and surely I recognised your hand in Saturday’s *Examiner and Times*. I am very glad to see that part of the article is quoted in the *Scotsman*. Your explanation of the peculiar features of the present commercial position is not merely ingenious, but just.—Yours truly,

“W. B. HODGSON.”

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, April 12, 1878.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—In accordance with your wish I have handed Mr. Leslie's letter to Alexander Ireland, who will, I suppose, forward it to you. It may have a good bracing effect on the brain to be told that the Cycle doctrine is 'absolutely baseless in fact and reason,' by a gentleman of such illustrious descent, whose writings have 'made way' in America, even though in this case the dictum is unsupported by a single iota of fact and reason. When this gentleman *did* show his reasons in the *Daily News*, about ten years ago, I spent more trouble (as you will remember) in giving him an answer than I should be inclined to spend again upon him, unless he proved to have 'bettered his conclusions' in the meantime. I have a fear that if the professional world were not 'salted' with such savouring salt as yourself and my evermore admired friend Jevons, I should be in danger of drawing rash conclusions as to the general guild of them.

"I now return the letter of Mr. Duncan, whose book I have not yet seen, and the letter of your pupil, which it must have been a great pleasure to you to receive. I have read this last with great interest, but was attracted most by the incidental statement of what you had not named—that you have lately been lecturing on periodicity.¹ I should have been greatly interested to know something of your treatment of this subject. Jevons finds an ever-widening basis of phenomenal facts, but is inclined to adulterate (as I call it) my theory with such physical matters as sun-spots, &c.

"The war feeling is becoming a sort of national vertigo, and seems to imply a want of blood-letting. . . . You would see in Wednesday's *Examiner* Broadfield's review of Jevons' 'Primer.' When will you do the same in the *Scotsman*? The thwack of your ferule took my breath; my notion was to use

¹ [Professor Hodgson used Mr. Mills' pamphlets as one of his class-books.]

the word in its accusative relation, as I knew the word was libellous. . . . However, you are final Court and Appeal, and I adopt your suggestion, even though it be libellous.—Ever yours,

JOHN MILLS."

HOW THE "CREDIT CYCLE" PAPERS CAME TO BE WRITTEN.

A rather careless wording of a circular in reference to a proposed testimonial to the memory of Professor Jevons, led to an unfortunate misstatement in the *Times* of October 16, 1883, in an appreciative article on Mr. Jevons' work, &c. This was to the effect that "the brilliant series of his writings" included "the famous essay on Credit Cycles."

A short extract from two letters of Mr. Mills—one written to a member of the Statistical Society, the other to the *Times*—will clearly explain the whole matter.

In the first letter he says:—

"Of course, knowing all the facts, and remembering that the only occasion on which Jevons wrote under the title 'Credit Cycles' (a chapter in his 'Science Primer on Political Economy') the proof sheet was sent to me for correction and remark, and contained special reference to the origin of the very name, I could only conclude that the statement was a mistake, which would find instant correction when made known. In the meantime, there appeared in a Manchester journal two successive letters calling attention to the puzzling statement made in the *Times*, and the matter could not rest there."

To the *Times* Mr. Mills wrote a letter, from which an extract or two is taken :—

“SIR,—Your recent notice of the Jevons Memorial movement has been warmly appreciated in this city, where Mr. Jevons spent the best of his mature years. . . . To your brief sketch of his work and mental characteristics may I be permitted to add one feature, which tends to keep his memory here in reverent regard? I refer to the spirit of helpful sympathy which he threw into his relations with other students of political economy; for he never was more happy than when encouraging research in others, and in defending what he held to be true in the results of labours not his own. Of this spirit I am able to cite a notable instance, and I do it with a deep feeling of grateful pleasure. In the year 1867, when the first stunning results of the commercial convulsion of the previous year were giving way to calm analysis of causes and prudent forecast of the future, I mentioned to Jevons certain considerations bearing on a supposed periodicity in the fluctuations of commerce and credit. He at once expressed a deep interest in the subject, and urged upon me the course of investigation which resulted in the two papers read before the Statistical Society on ‘Credit Cycles and the Origin of Commercial Panics,’ and ‘On the Post-Panic Period of 1866–70.’ He subsequently incorporated the doctrine with his class-teaching of economics, and whenever he had occasion to deal with the subject of commercial periodicity, he was almost fastidiously careful to refer to my treatment of Credit Cycles in 1867 and 1871. The subject had a singular fascination for him, and it is probably from his frequent references to it that the essays on Credit Cycles have been erroneously ascribed to him in the appeal issued by the Memorial Committee. My experience of this most honourable feature of Jevons’ character has been shared by other students of economics in this city.”

Though Bonamy Price and John Mills did not see eye to eye in their theories, they had much friendly correspondence.

BONAMY PRICE to J. MILLS.

“NORHAM GARDENS, OXFORD,
May 22, 1871.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your inaugural pamphlet¹ has interested me immensely; so much so, that it has excited in me a keen desire to go over it with you page by page. Can’t you come and pay me a visit here? This term I am quite full, but in the October term it would give me great pleasure indeed to talk the subject over with you closely. We are not far apart. I do not see why we should not quite agree at last. . . . I dislike the word ‘credit’ heartily—a root of confusion—and never use it if I can help it. Come and talk it out.—Very truly yours,

BONAMY PRICE.”

BONAMY PRICE to J. MILLS.

“OXFORD, March 2, 1872.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I shall reach Manchester, I trust, on Wednesday the 13th, at two, and proceed at once to King Street.

“I shall be most glad to meet Professor Jevons, and I thank you very much for all your kindness. I take it that the paper will take about half-an-hour to read, perhaps a little more: enough, I cannot but think.—Yours very sincerely,

“B. PRICE.

“The title had better be ‘The Doctrine of Rent.’”

BONAMY PRICE to J. MILLS.

“OXFORD, March 26, 1872.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—I see by the papers that there has been a meeting at Bradford on the Nine Hours’ Movement. I regret more than ever, as I told you in my last

¹ “On the Post-Panic Period,” read at Statistical Society, March 1871.

letter, that I had not time to discuss this and other matters with you. But I am anxious to say that if the thing really intended is to shut up the factories and mills at the end of nine hours, nothing more being done that day, then, of course, all I have said in *Blackwood* about the Newcastle Compromise does not apply at all. I do not wish to be misunderstood on this point.

“These frosts are making fearful havoc here amongst early shoots and buds. I often think of all the shrubberies at Bowdon. Kind regards, *cher vous*.—Yours very sincerely,

“B. PRICE.”

C

BONAMY PRICE to J. MILLS.

“1 UPPER WESTBOURNE TERRACE, HYDE PARK,
LONDON, April 13, 1872.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—. . . I wrote to Mr. Edmund Ashworth, of Eggerton Hole, who had sent me two letters in the *Guardian*, commenting on mine. He rather wished me to answer one signed Watson. I did not think it worth while. Very soon afterwards I met Tom Hughes in the street. He at once exclaimed, ‘What a row you have made at Manchester! I am just come from there. They are fuming over your letter. Dr. Watson is full of wrath!’ ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘it is a doctor, is it? I have been asked to write a rejoinder.’ ‘Pray don’t,’ he retorted quickly, ‘there is already row enough!’

“Infinitely diverting; it’s all your doing.—Yours very truly,
“B. PRICE.”

BONAMY PRICE to J. MILLS.

“2 NORHAM GARDENS, OXFORD,
January 1878.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—So many thanks for your kind letter; it has the old ring about it, which pleases me extremely.

“Thanks for the permission; certainly I intended to add what you mention.

“I quite forget whether I told you that H. Hucks Gibbs,

ex-Governor of the Bank of England, sent me a Xmas-box on Xmas morning of nineteen quarto pages. It was followed by another of fourteen. I reposted, and a long battle ensued. His great point was an upbraiding of me for confounding the Bank Directors with 'the fools' of the City Articles and commercial literature; for they adopt 'my theories and practise them.' I was astounded. Why then do you leave me in my isolation?—an excommunicated 'heretic and theorist?' Because, he replies, it is your business to preach and ours to practise. He ought to have added, and to get paid for it. Then, to my further amazement, he announces that he will print the correspondence for 'private circulation,' jocularities and all. Very funny, indeed!

"This may be a second edition to you. If so, pray forgive it; I cannot remember whether I told you of this.

"We are going to Ross in March; if I possibly can, I will look in upon you in the summer.—Yours very sincerely,

"B. PRICE."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"9 BIRCH GROVE,
RUSHOLME, November 23, 1866.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have been wishing not only to thank you for the copy of your pamphlet which you kindly sent me, but to tell you how thoroughly I concur in all the opinions you have expressed. So much nonsense was talked at the Social Science Association, and so much is constantly talked about currency and the bank, that I was delighted when I saw from the brief report of your paper how thoroughly you supported the principle of the Bank Act. You seem to me to bring out in the most convincing manner that instead of the Bank Act being the cause of the disaster, it really saved us from we know not how worse a disaster.

"At the same time you do not deny, if I read your paper rightly, that the banking system somewhere wants a little correction. This is strongly shown in the pamphlets of Mr. J. B. Smith and Mr. David Baxter. The conduct of the great J.-S. banks is obviously reckless, and their dependence on the

Bank of England altogether unsound. It is the position of the banking department, not the issue department, which is anomalous and dangerous, and that of course is in no way regulated by law, but by custom.

"The fact is, the panic in the spring was caused by bad banking, not by bad currency ; and it is proposed to remedy things by giving over the issue of currency to those who have brought us to the verge of national bankruptcy.

"The *Publishers' Circular* of November 15 carelessly describes you as an opponent of the Bank Act.—Believe me, my dear sir, yours very faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"OWENS COLLEGE, October 17, 1871.

"DEAR MR. MILLS.—The Committee¹ have decided, as I may say, *nemine contradicente*, to propose you as President, and they desired me to arrange with you as to Inaugural Address in November.

"I feel much pleasure at leaving the Society in your hands.
—Yours faithfully,

W. STANLEY JEVONS."

[Mr. Mills was re-elected for 1872-73.]

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"November 18, 1873.

"DEAR MILLS,—I have read the article on Herbert Spencer which you mentioned to me. It is an able one, and is written, as I have heard, by Moulton, a recent Senior Wrangler. I am afraid that there is a good deal of truth in his criticism, and on the whole, it is damaging as regards Spencer's conception of physical science. When I read the First Principles I was occasionally puzzled to know exactly in what sense he spoke of the persistence of force. I daresay that a great many of the details and illustrations of Spencer's philosophy will not stand

¹ Manchester Statistical Society.

examination, and I think it is a pity that he has attempted to produce a complete system of philosophy.

"Nevertheless, I do not think that any criticism will shake the general truth and value of his fundamental ideas, which, especially as applied to mental and moral matters, are most fruitful.—Yours, &c.,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"THE CHESTNUTS, January 3, 1877.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—The organ has been quite successfully re-established, and seems to sound much better in this than in the former house. The tone comes out more, and resounds about the house.

"I think we shall be charmed with Hampstead in the spring and summer. Mrs. Jevons and I hope that in the livelier season you will find some opportunity of coming up with Mrs. Mills and staying with us. I do not think I shall revisit Manchester for some time to come, but I hope that some time or other I may revisit your delightful retreat at Bowdon. The summer holiday and comparative relief from College work has been very beneficial to me, and I am now in pretty good working order. I am just engaged upon a new edition of the 'Principles of Science,' and also upon a Political Economy Primer to serve as a companion to my 'Logic Primer.'

"I have not heard any concerts yet to compare with Hallé's as a whole, but I have been repeatedly to St. James's Hall popular concerts, where the chamber music is delightful. With best wishes for a happy New Year.—Yours very faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"² THE CHESTNUTS, WEST HEATH,
HAMPSTEAD, N.W., June 3, 1877.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—The discussion at the Political Economy Club would have amused rather than informed you. Grenfell's opening was not impressive, but there was a very lively discus-

sion, in which Villiers, Edwin Chadwick, Harrison, Newmarch, Fawcett, Courtenay, Dilke, and myself took part. Most of what was said was off the point, and little corresponded with our views, but Courtenay and I upheld the periodic character. Courtenay takes a really scientific view of such matters.

"I hope that next session you will visit us and join in one of our meetings, which are sometimes very interesting, though not always.

"I am glad that my impressions of Rubenstein agree so well with those you yourself expressed.—Believe me, yours very faithfully.

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"February 11, 1878.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—In a few weeks my 'Political Economy Primer' will be out. I give a long chapter to 'Credit Cycles,' which it occurs to me you may like to see before it is printed off. I therefore send proofs by book-post. I thought it a good opportunity to disseminate yours and my various ideas upon the subject. The nature of the book does not admit of particular reference or discussion, but I hope you do not object to my introducing your name in a way which does not make you responsible for the statement.—Faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"February 14, 1878.

"DEAR MILLS,—Thanks for your letters and pamphlet. The letters seem very interesting, as regards the letters of Gibbs, because he lets one a little into the arcana of the bank parlour.

"I am quite aware that you insisted on the recurrence of these panics in spite of all kinds of casual incidents of the currency, &c. When I write more at freedom I shall bring it out clearly.—Yours faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"September 11, 1878.

"DEAR MILLS,—Thanks for your answer to my former letter; it interested me much, and no one is likely to know better than yourself about the advent or otherwise of a crisis. But I am not quite sure whether a breakdown of credit in the ordinary sense is of the very essence of a crisis or rather a collapse. A general failure of profitable business may involve a breakdown of industry, and an impossibility on the part of limited companies and others of paying their way. I will not attempt to put my idea clearly; indeed I do not clearly apprehend what I mean. But we shall see in the course of two months what happens.—I am, yours,

"W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"January 1, 1880.

"DEAR MILLS,—Shall we number you among the London statisticians? It is time you were among us.

"With best wishes for a happy New Year and a *happy decade* for yourself and all your family.—Yours,

"W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"January 7, 1889.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—The [London] Statistical Society's circular was sent 'by order,' and though I am sorry you do not feel inclined to a more active pursuit of statistics, I acquiesce regretfully in your decision.

"I get on but slowly with Mill's philosophy, having other works on hand. I shall probably have an article in next

Contemporary, which may interest you, and I have many others in contemplation, but they require long hatching.

"The revival of trade is interesting to us in a scientific point of view, as well as important otherwise. It is curious that in several societies with which I am connected there is a falling off in the current of new members. This I attribute to the fact that the depression of the last few years is only now reaching private incomes in its full intensity. Expenditure is now directed as much as possible to profitable undertakings. I fear we shall have plenty of bubbles, and probably a coal famine in the next three years. Then, perhaps, a temporary revulsion, like that of 1872-73; but I now have complete confidence in the cycle of 10.45 years, or therabouts.—Yours very faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

" June 16, 1880.

"DEAR MILLS,—I now enclose proof of article, together with proposed postscript and copy of clause. Do you think it well to reprint the latter?

"The speech of Fawcett which is in the papers this morning makes the matter worse, and is quite absurd, having regard to the previous history of the measure. He may not intend this and that; but Ministers come and go, while the Department remains.

"If you detect anything which is in bad taste or incorrect, or weak, or libellous, and so forth, I shall much like to have it marked. I have a second copy of the proof.

"I daresay I have somewhat overstated some points, but there is no good writing about anything unless you get a little warm over it.—Yours,

W. S. JEVONS."

CHAPTER III

LEAVING the dry-as-dust paths of Political Economy, to which the last chapter was devoted, it is pleasant to turn back and linger awhile in the "green walks" of more personal and domestic life.

As the chronicles of these last ten or twelve years were gathered together, a feeling of surprise was excited as to how much was comprised within them.

In addition to all that has been mentioned, Mr. Mills during that period joined the copartnery of the *Examiner*, attending its business meetings, and assisting in the general conducting of the paper. Yet there is no impression left of signs of extreme weariness or physical weakness. When we first met he gave small promise of the vigorous health of later years. Dyspepsia, with its attendant depression, told heavily upon him, and he was pale and nervous; in a few years, however, thanks to a strong will, constant work, and hydropathy, most of this disappeared. He was a moderate smoker; when about twenty-three, finding himself the worse for it, he gave it up, only resuming it when over thirty years of age. He revenged himself for having to sit with his friends



NORTHWOLD (BUILT 1870).

[To face p. 343.]

enjoying their own smoke, by a vigorous ode in condemnation of "that filthy weed," reciting it to them to their great amusement, giving, they told him, only a keener zest to their indulgence!

In 1875 he found time to write for the *Edinburgh Review* an article upon "The Life and Letters of Beethoven," and in 1869-70 to build and remove to our new home, "Northwold," on a site of which we had long talked and dreamt. A favourite walk of ours was past St. Margaret's Church, through the Park to Dunham village, returning by the under-side of the hill, where a narrow path led to a ridge overlooking the valley. Along this ridge was a sunken fence—our frequent resting-place. Close to our left hand stood a forest sycamore, to the right an ancient spreading ash, and often as we sat there we said to each other how delightful it would be to live on such a spot, with such an outlook.

One lovely spring day found us there, loth to leave; the air was crystal clear, right before us lay the Mersey Valley, backed in the distance to the right by the dark ridges of Blackstone Edge, to the left by the spurs and peak of Rivington Pike, a radius of some fifty miles, and twenty miles across. Exactly opposite to us was the sharp cleavage, opening to Rossendale Vale, on one side of which rose Holcomb Hill, surmounted by Sir Robert Peel's monument.

Somewhat nearer, to the right, Stand Church crowned a solitary hill, twin sister to Bowdon Hill,

and nearly opposite to it ; the tall tapered spire of St. Margaret's, and the square tower of Stand Church (old landmarks both) stood on each side of the valley, like silent sentinels guarding its entrance. From below our feet stretched the level plains of vivid green, here and there dotted with little farmsteads, the outline of their thatched roofs dimly seen through the pure spring bridal-veil of masses of white damson blossom.

The thought, born of a long-cherished wish, found almost simultaneous expression, "Shall we build us a house just here?" The idea took root ; very soon the land was bought, and I was immersed in the delightful task of planning a house to our own liking. I say "I," for my husband had not time for details, only stipulating for a library and room for his organ, leaving the rest pretty much to me, till the time came for his final approval, his chief delight and interest being in the laying out of the garden. The quick slope of the land at once suggested terracing up to the level of the house ; so it happened that when finished, the stone steps leading from the top terrace stood just midway between the ash and the sycamore. To his horror, the architect had wanted to cut down the trees. "Man," said he, "you may build a dozen houses, but you can't build a forest tree—you must make the house fit the trees!"

In 1870 our dream was realised, and "North-

wold" became a haven of rest¹ to the end of his life.

1873.—On May 12 we once more, and for the last time, met Emerson. He was, with Miss Emerson, spending two or three days with Mr. Ireland before sailing for home, and came one day to lunch with us at Northwold. He and Alexander came early, and the three had a long sit and talk in the garden, Mrs. Ireland, Miss Emerson, and Mrs. R. R. Moore coming later. There occurred during this short visit a simple and beautifully characteristic incident which I thought worthy of preservation.

As we were pacing about the lawn, one of the little girls ran up to Mr. Emerson, holding out a bunch of daisies; lifting her up, he thanked her with a kiss, and gently put her down again, not breaking the thread of talk in which they were absorbed, holding the daisies carefully all the time. Presently we went in to lunch, and Emerson, putting his hat on to a form in the porch, dropped the flowers into it. What a quiet dignity was in his manner, as he talked! afterwards Mrs. Moore said to me, "Is he not as a king amongst men?" When settled in the library for coffee and chat, I ran upstairs, took out my precious slip of blue paper where it had lain for twenty-six years, and laid it before Mr. Emerson.

"You have not really kept this all these years!"

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 78.

he asked, greatly amused, and somewhat touched as well.

Taking up a pen he added, as I requested, his name and the date, and it was once more carefully laid by, to be brought to light after the lapse of another quarter of a century.

As rings the pine-tree in the wind
So rings in the wind a sprig of thyme

RW Emerson

Manchester
2 March 1848.

12 May 1873

R. Waldo Emerson

[See page 144.]

As our honoured guest left, we all went out into the porch to say farewell, and when he, absent-minded, took up and put on his hat, lo ! all the daisies fell out, showering over his face to the ground ! "Bless the child !" he softly said, and stooping, picked up every daisy, taking them away in his hand. The child was there, and he would not have her feelings hurt by any seeming neglect of her little gift.

In the evening Mr. Ireland had an "At home," and after the other guests had left, the host, Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Mills had a long sitting, not breaking up till after midnight. Alexander had begged Mr. Mills to show Emerson some of his poems, but he refused ; however, Mr. Ireland read some to him, and he said, "Why does he not publish them ?" Of course, "The Law" pleased him greatly.

A few days later, Mr. Ireland was telling my husband this, and again urged him to publish "just a small selection." "Not I," he said ; "why, if I published a book of poetry, there'd would be a run on the bank in no time ! You are a shareholder, how would you like that !"

After Mr. Mills' death, on my recounting this to an eminent London banker and financier, he wrote to me saying—

"It is evident that when he was asked to allow his poems to be published, and made the answer you quote to me, Mr. Mills had heard the remark of (I think) Lord Justice Ellen-

borough, on being told that Mr. Rogers the banker had written a poem, to the effect that if his banker so much as said a witty thing—much more wrote a poem—he would take his account away from him ! I may also say that I have known two other bankers who sacrificed to the Muses : the one stopped payment, and the other was strictly forbidden by his firm to publish."

Nevertheless, Mr. Mills always held with, and quoted Sydney Dobell,¹ for whom he had a great admiration, and who "always wished to prove that a literary man might be a thoroughly capable 'man of affairs,' and that the poetic or ideal quality, rightly cultivated and employed, should assist, instead of impeding practical life."

Mr. Ruskin having expressed a strong feeling of regret about the scheme of supplying Manchester with water from Thirlmere, Mr. Mills replied to him in some verses, entitled "Thirlmere,"² which were published in the *Examiner*. Of these "Verax" said, in a letter reprinted from the *Weekly Times*—

"No man has a keener eye for beauty than my friend. . . . He has given a fair share of his holidays to the Lake District for the last thirty years, yet till the present year has never done justice to Thirlmere."

This year (1877) the death of his brother Samuel led to the following letters to Dr. Hodgson :—

¹ John Nichol, "Collected Poems of Sydney Dobell," 1895.
² "Vox Humana," p. 50.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"February 19, 1877.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—No, the brother I have lost is not James, the musician whom you know, but my elder brother Sam; whom he was you will learn from a local paper, from which you will see that he made his mark in his native town. Poor Sam! he was one of those shy, retiring creatures, content with a quiet humdrum routine of life, whom you would never suspect of any reserve of power; but on any occasion of public discussion he would stand up for the right, bold as a lion, and show himself an elegant, cultivated, and impassioned speaker. He had the tenderness of a woman, and this with physical weakness, gave him usually an appearance of rather molluscous softness, till anything occurred requiring exceptional energy, when he showed abundant mental biceps. We are all mourning his loss sadly.

"JOHN MILLS."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"December 1877.

"DEAR HODGSON,—Grindon's book is pleasant and gossipy. I do not think much of his compliment, but am glad he quoted from and cordially appreciated my tributary letter on Philip Thompson. . . . How the 'salt of the earth' is sinking back into the ground, with the deliquescence of death! Tell me what you think of the epitaph on the other side, which I may put upon my brother Sam's monument on the Dukinfield hill-side. On the principle that brevity and terseness give to speech something of the eloquence of silence, you will find that three of the lines are of three syllables, and four of four, that the whole is monosyllabic, and almost purely Saxon:—

‘ Work well done,
Race well run,
Crown well won,
He, true and just,
Leaves here this dust,
His Soul is gone
To Christ his trust.’

The 'he' of the fourth line refers, of course, to the name given on the tablet above.—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

Afterwards Mr. Mills altered the lines, and finally sent them to his sister-in-law as given in "Vox Humana" (page 54)—being almost identical with the inscription placed on Garfield's tomb. These lines have a curious record both here and in America, which may some time be given.

In a later account given after the death of President Garfield to Colonel Shaw, of New York, Mr. Mills records three or four attempts—"none of which," he said, "seemed to me adequate." Of these the first form ran as follows:—

"His work well done,
His race well run,
His crown well won,
Here let him rest."

Another was the one sent to Dr. Hodgson; but the first one was finally adopted by him as most satisfactory, and, though never inscribed on the monument, was the one known to his family and friends as his lines to his brother's memory. Two lines of it are used in the memorial lines which conclude the Life of Dr. Hodgson:—

"The genial friend lies here,
His work well done,
His rest well won."

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"NORTHWOLD, May 21, 1878.

"**M**Y DEAR FRIEND,—I was in London last week attending the annual meeting and dinner of the Association of English Country Bankers, and I managed to get from there to Brighton for a day, and rushed upon the deck of a steamer, and half-way across the Channel for a trip, taking in a mighty gulp of salt air, which seemed to touch and tingle at the very roots of my jaded system. I was soon enough back in my King Street chair, dull and docile in *sæculo sæculorum!* I was at E. K. Blyth's for a night or two, happy in the sincere welcome which always awaits me there, and I looked up Jevons and his organ, snugly perched on the gorsey-golden heath of Hampstead. *Cela suffit de moi-même.*

"Why did you not come this way? . . . We were disappointed not to see you at the *Examiner* meeting, of which Alexander Ireland will have told you everything.

"Lancashire is not made attractive by these miserable strikes and bad trade, which one can hardly forget, even in these bosky and bloomy gardens of Bowdon. Have you not a few more rapier-digs for Dizzy? They are welcome in the *Examiner*. For a while, however, we are given over to the devil and his majority.—Ever yours,

JOHN MILLS.

"Remember me kindly to Mr. Ellis."

The bank having by this time attained the "momentum" alluded to in its early days in a letter to Dr. Hodgson, Mr. Mills felt much inclined to a quieter and more studious life; but there was yet another field in which he was to tilt a lance, and when the, as he called it, "Bimetallic trumpet" clanged, the challenge was met, and before long he became the recognised champion of

Monometallism. In this he was often ably supported in the press by some of his brother-bankers, notably Mr. Muir, T. R. Wilkinson, and Mr. Moxon, who is now General Manager of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, having succeeded Mr. J. H. S. Crompton. Mr. Crompton, having been from his boyhood under the training of Mr. Mills, left Nantwich with him, became one of the staff of his bank, and, when Mr. Mills retired from the position of General Manager, was at once appointed as his successor.

His letters led to a wide correspondence with financial savants in England and on the Continent, both Monometallists and Bimetallists, which took up too much of his leisure moments. I would sometimes sigh, and ask, "What is to become of the poetry?" My little May flower, however, never failed to blossom, and in any case of strong feeling, personal or political, he instinctively turned to the old source.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, April 1879.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The Chamber of Commerce resolutions were drawn up by me at the request of some of the Directors. The object was to give conclusions without argument, terse, comprehensive—presenting a nutshell summary of the question. Three or four drafts of resolutions (all single standard) were before the Board, but mine was selected and

passed with the alteration of two or three words, which I venture to think are not improvements. However, the true doctrine is there, the rest is of little consequence.

"Our Easter circle has just dispersed. . . .

"Yours ever,

"JOHN MILLS."

J. Mills to W. B. Hodgson.

"SHANDON, October 1879.

"MY DEAR HODGSON,—On our way home we called at Shandon, a pretty but not a bracing place.

"We shall no doubt reach home the better for our rambles. We shall at any rate carry with us one more delightful reminiscence of 'Bonnie Bonaly,' and all its denizens. One is glad to think of your living in such a place, and your leaving it (unless you come to Bowdon) would give your friends a pang.

"Kindest regards to Mrs. Hodgson and the children.

"Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS.

"P.S.—In a fierce polemic against Dean Close in the matter of Total Abstinence, the *Saturday Review* of yesterday says, 'There is a tendency in certain morbid states of temper and religion to secrete adjectives.' Is not this in the true Sydney Smithian style? In the same paper is a racy disquisition on your Bradford gatherings."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"BRANCH HILL, HAMPSHIRE
June 19, 1881.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—Thanks for the copy of your letter on bi-metallism, which I have read with much interest. It is a strong and pointed argument against Chernuschi and his school. I had not seen the letter before, and if you sent me an *Examiner*, I must have accidentally failed to notice the letter.

"Greenfell's extract is probably quoted from Griffen's paper in the *Statistical Journal*, March 1879, vol. xiii. pp. 36-68, an important paper, but I have not found the precise passage. I do not think the subject of bi-metallism is worth much powder and shot. The whole thing will collapse at the great meeting of Conference.

"My own impression is that the French Government are heartily sick of their double standard, and are putting up Chernuschi so that they may conveniently recede under the cover of his absurdities.

"Hoping that Mrs. Mills and yourself are quite well, as are all here.—I am, yours faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

[This letter is a valuable addition to the convincing reply given to an attempt made at the Brussels Congress to show that Mr. Jevons had changed his views on the subject of bi- *versus* monometallism.]

CHAPTER IV

1879.—We paid, sad to tell, our last visit to “Bonnie Bonaly.” We had had a tour in Scotland, returning by Oban and so on to Bonaly. Whilst at Oban we had the pleasure of visiting Professor Blackie, at his lovely home, Altnacraig. We arrived at Oban just in time to send a line to Mr. Blackie asking for directions, and a day that would suit his convenience. Having dined we went out for an exploring stroll, diving into the narrow dark streets of the town. Seeing a bright light, and hearing sounds of laughter, we went on, and found, as we thought, some entertainment going on in a little chapel. Quietly pushing open the door we looked in. There was the Professor, speaking vigorously and with great earnestness; now and then his audience—all men—looked solemn enough, then burst out into gusts of laughter and clapping. The jokes were not for us, for all was spoken in pure Gaelic. We met and accosted him as he came out, and after greeting us in his own hearty fashion, he arranged for us to be with them by twelve o’clock the next day.

.The next morning Mr. Blackie took my husband

for a wonderful ramble over the mountain, Mrs. Blackie, who was not well, kindly taking charge of me. We left in the afternoon for Bonaly, there spending, as we always did, a time full of quiet intense enjoyment, Dr. Hodgson donning his seven-leagued boots, and marching his friend all over the country, and gentle Mrs. Hodgson (whose one idea is to make other people happy) and I wandering in the grounds, or sitting in sympathetic talk wherever fancy pleased us.

It was when staying with Dr. Hodgson at Bonaly that we saw our friend at his best. His life had been hard, his path rugged. The softening influences of domestic happiness, he used to say, "he had never known." Upon his brother Thomas was centred his strongest family affection ; that brother's death by drowning cast over him a lifelong shadow. He rose by dint of sheer hard work, his strong, clear brain soon carving out a career ; his grasp of educational problems, and his wonderful ability in stating facts and deducing sound theories from them, became widely felt, and one appointment followed another in quick succession. This led to frequent change of residence, and he did not venture to, as he said, "you happy folk can do," settle down in one chosen spot.

His marriage in 1862 to Emily, daughter of Sir Joshua Walmsley, was the dawn of a new and happy life ; and when in 1871 he was elected to the

chair of Economic Science in Edinburgh, and then in 1874 bought Bonaly Tower, we all rejoiced for and with him.

Of his success here, his rapidly-growing influence, both educationally and politically, all is told in the well-known "Life and Letters of Dr. W. B. Hodgson," edited by Professor Meiklejohn. I attempt no description of the personality of one in whose temperament the lights were so brilliant, the shadows so deep, ever varying, but always genuine. The epitaph¹ written by Mr. Mills, and printed at the end of the "Life and Letters," will suffice as the best expression of his deep regard and sorrow at his loss.

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

"MANCHESTER, April 1880.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad you liked my election lines in the *Examiner*. The humour of the situation was irresistible, and there was fun in the construction of some of the rhymes. I had the usual allowance of misprints.

"The paper has been very lively during the election, and the permanent result I hope will be good. The election itself is a prodigious fact, but it throws an enormous responsibility on half-a-dozen men. Heaven grant they be equal to the occasion! It is Gladstone's grandest moment. Shall we put him in harness again, and make him grind for us?

"I sympathised with your allusions to your own position. Had you been free from official manacles it would have been easy for you by the aid of the 'Old Adam' and a little Mammon to get a seat. Two evenings ago I met all our new M.P.'s, and could not help thinking of you. The time will

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 80.

come, however; in the meantime your name should be in Gladstone's and Adam's minds. One thing gives me a cold pang, and that is the thought of your shutting yourself out of your Paradise under the Pentlands, and taking to the air and water of London. No doubt you would do even this thing at the call of duty and of country. Dulce, &c., &c. When shall we have the 'long talk'? . . . Come this way when you can, and we will all welcome you.—Ever yours,

"JOHN MILLS."

1880 opened brightly, soon alas! to be clouded by shadow and loss. Dr. Hodgson and Mr. Mills were at one in their indignant contempt for Napoleon III.; also in deep distrust of Disraeli; and the Liberal victory of 1880 was a source of much rejoicing and many jubilant letters. The election lines which so pleased the Doctor bore special reference to the "Peace-with-honour" Treaty, and were published in the *Examiner*.

Dr. Hodgson was equally delighted with some lines dedicated to Victor Hugo in 1856, entitled "Jupiter Amans," which also appeared in the *Examiner* :—

"JUPITER AMANS.

DEDICATED TO VICTOR HUGO.

'Le Petit' call not him who with one act
Has turned old fable into modern fact.
Nap. Louis courted Europe, Europe shied
(Th' Imperial purple was so newly dyed),
'I'll have her, though,' thought he, 'by rape or rapine,
Jove nods sometimes, but catch a Nap. a napping!
And now I think of Jove, 'twas Jove's own fix.
Pardieu! I'll borrow one of Jove's own tricks :

Old itching ‘Palm’ I’ll tickle with a joke,
 And he shall lend me England’s decent cloak !’
 ’Twas said and done, and his success was full ;
 He won Europa with the guise of Bull !

“J. M.”

Manchester Examiner, February 7, 1856.

The following is the last letter written to Dr. Hodgson just before he left for the Educational Congress at Brussels :—

J. MILLS to W. B. HODGSON.

“NORTHWOLD, July 11, 1880.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—That fair and good soul¹ is gone. She has always been much to me, as we had many points of sympathy. But how poor are words in presence of such an event ! What can one say to poor Leese, to whom she was such a treasure—I cannot face the sight of him ! It is a great shock to me and many more.—Ever yours,

“JOHN MILLS.

“P.S.—I wish you were not going abroad just now. Call on your way home, and we can discuss many things—*Examiner* affairs, and—your future, concerning which I have many thoughts and high hopes.”

Alas ! how suddenly and remorselessly were these “high hopes” crushed ! One day in August came the pitiful news that Dr. Hodgson had died suddenly at Brussels. Truly, words are not for such blows ! Mr. Mills and Alexander Ireland mourned together, becoming more inseparable than ever,

¹ Miss Leese (“Sallie”) died from the effects of a fall ; see sonnet to S. E. L., “Vox Humana,” p. 9.

comforting one another as they best could under a sense of common loss.

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"CAMDEN LODGE, LITTLEHAMPTON,
September 21, 1880.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—It was with much regret that I heard of our friend Dr. Hodgson's sudden death at Brussels. He was so intimate a friend of yours, that I feel sure you must have suffered from the loss. My acquaintance with and memory of him was disjointed and occasional, but began a long time ago when he was head-master of the Liverpool Mechanics' School, and I was a little boy there about ten or twelve years old. But his teaching made a great impression upon me, and I have never forgotten it.

"We have been spending three weeks in this quiet but in some respects very agreeable watering-place. There is a good sea-beach for the children, who are in terribly good health, and capital excursions to Arundel, Chichester, and other places of interest and beauty.

"Have you ever read Thomas Corbet's book, 'An Enquiry into the Causes and Modes of the Wealth of Individuals, or the Principles of Trade and Speculation Explained' (London, 1841, Smith & Elder)? Though badly written, it shows a greater insight into the conditions of safe speculation than any book I ever met with, though he was not aware of the decennial varieties of trade.

"I hope to set fairly to work on my 'Principles of Economics' in a week or two, having just completed my laborious logical exercises.—Yours very faithfully,

W. S. JEVONS."

W. S. JEVONS to J. MILLS.

"CAMDEN LODGE, LITTLEHAMPTON,
September 23, 1880.

"MY DEAR MILLS,—My previous letter, which crossed yours of the 20th, will have told you how I sympathise with you in your loss of so old a friend as Dr. Hodgson. I regret

that I had not more frequent opportunity of meeting him, but I remember with much pleasure my visit to his house when I went to Edinburgh for my LL.D. degree. My impression is that Hodgson had great powers, and that his failing was in not making an adequate use of them. I know probably all his acknowledged writings, and they are all good, but sadly too few and limited.

"I am not a candidate for anything except for a study where organ-grinders and other musicians are inaudible. I wish Bell, instead of making such wonderful discoveries as to the conveyance of sound, would turn his attention to the production of sound-proof houses.—Yours, W. S. JEVONS."

1881.—The death of Garfield, the course of whose suffering Mr. Mills, in common with all the world, watched with deep sympathy, drew forth a sonnet¹ to his memory. He forwarded this through his friend Consul Shaw, from whom he received the following letter :—

COL. A. SHAW to J. MILLS.

" UNITED STATES CONSULATE, MANCHESTER,
October 14, 1881.

"DEAR MR. MILLS,—I have forwarded to Mr. James Russell Lowell a copy of your beautiful sonnet; he has replied to me as follows :—

"‘I have great pleasure in forwarding to Mrs. Garfield the spirited sonnet you were good enough to enclose. She will treasure it with her other immortelles.’"

"It may be pleasing to you to know how well Mr. Lowell regarded your words.—Yours faithfully, ALBERT D. SHAW."

1882.—On Sunday, August 13, Professor Jevons was, as is only too well known, drowned while

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 12.

bathing at Bexhill. These successive shocks shook my husband greatly, and for some months he was far from well. The two sonnets¹ to W. S. Jevons, which appeared in the *Examiner* a month later, gave utterance to the sorrow—almost despair—that overwhelmed him. He had hoped for so much good from the future work of both his lost friends.

A striking similarity of tastes and habits added much to the mutual attraction felt by Jevons and my husband. Both men found great fascination in the problems of Economic Science: both found also in music solace and recreation: both preferred home and fireside life, with the company of a few congenial friends, to the fetters of conventional society. Save to closest friends, both were reserved, and, it has been said, “shy”; but “retiring” is the truer descriptive word—to slip in and sit down at the back of a platform came naturally to them, even if they had to take part in the meeting, but, when duty called them, there was no hesitation—no shyness; they were of the type of men who instinctively wait for the call “Come up hither,” which, when heard, was promptly and cheerfully obeyed.

1883.—Mr. Mills was not in the habit of keeping a personal diary—life was too busy—but from a book of “Thoughts,” jotted down, no doubt, just as they occurred, we find penned in 1883 the following:—

¹ “Vox Humana,” pp. 10, 11.

"Day gives us white light, good for use and pleasure.
Night distills the dew-prism rich with trembling colours. Not
much do we know of the Protean beauty of the world till loss
has brought us tears to look through."

Again—

"True pathos lives and dies
In the slow lingering pause 'twixt this and that
Which goes and comes, as music deftly made
Dallies with bitter-sweet suspense, note-long,
Before solution with new chords."

On an earlier page we read—

"A quality can only be defined by help of its opposite.
Purity knows not itself, but the defiled know it only too well."

"Let silence speak, since speech must silent be."

"The test of a true love, even of the supreme passion, is
not in what it demands, but in what it consents to do without."

In 1883 Mr. Mills retired from the duties of hon. organist, which he had fulfilled for fifteen years. The congregation and choir could "not accept his resignation without placing on record the zeal and devotedness with which he had discharged the duties of his office, and its sense of the high musical character of his service, and the deep religious feeling which inspired it." The letter from which the above extract is taken was accompanied by two engravings—"St. Cecilia" and Dicksee's "Harmony," and a copy of Ruskin's "Stones of Venice"—an acceptable gift, as Mr. Mills' disapproval of

Ruskin's economic theories was more than counterbalanced by his great admiration for him as a teacher in the sphere of Art.

1884.—Once again the people were roused to indignation by the rejection of the Franchise Bill by the House of Lords. Mr. Mills threw out a song, called "The People's Anthem." It took the popular fancy, and was sung in crowded halls by the people, with great effect—in the packed Free-Trade Hall, with the organ accompaniment, and in Hanley and the Potteries, where it was especially approved. Thousand of copies were printed and distributed of "The People's Anthem," but the authorship was not allowed to transpire until after the passing of the Franchise Bill.

"THE PEOPLE'S ANTHEM, 1884.

(*Tune*—"Stand up!" No. 15, Moody and Sankey.)

Once more unfold the banner
 That braved the winds of yore,
 For we must fight the battle
 Our fathers fought before.
 Again the feudal gauntlet
 Smites Freedom in the face :
 Now, patriots, to the rescue,
 Or perish in disgrace !

We march, a banded nation,
 Toward Freedom's brighter day :
 Shall twice a hundred lordlings
 Bar millions on the way ?

Let slaves obey and tremble ;
 Let lackeys cringe and bow ;
 The sons of these free islands
 Have quite forgotten how !

In tones of peace and patience
 The nation spoke its will
 To shape a law of justice,
 And all the land was still—
 For England trusted Gladstone,
 And knew full well that he
 Would swing the axe of Freedom
 To fell the Upas tree !

Who is this lord that flouts us
 With gibes and jeers of scorn ?
 And his two hundred puppets,
 Are they our masters born ?
 Upswells in threatening thunder
 The nation's righteous wrath :
 Let those beware that cumber
 A free-born people's path !

From Scotia's misty mountains
 To Ireland's emerald vales,
 From our broad shires of England
 To rock-bound coasts of Wales,
 This one stern warning echoes—
 LET THOSE DENY, WHO DARE,
 THE FRANCHISE TO THE PEOPLE,
 AND LET THESE LORDS BEWARE ! ”

CHARLES AND MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

The first time Mr. Mills met Charles and Mary Cowden-Clarke was in 1848, when Mrs. Clarke (as a member of Charles Dickens's Amateur Company) played the part of Dame Quickly in Manchester ;

and again a year or two later, when Charles Cowden-Clarke was giving his memorable Shakespearian Lectures.

The Clarkes left England in 1856, and the next meeting was at Nice in 1860, when Mr. E. K. Blyth and Mr. Mills called upon them during their tour in Italy. Once again in 1861 they saw each other at the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, a festival Mr. Mills never, or rarely, missed for years. In 1877 Mr. Cowden-Clarke died, the year after their exchange of sonnets.¹

In 1882 Mrs. Clarke spent a few days at Bowdon with Mr. Ireland, and that was the last interview. How marvellously Mrs. Clarke retained her brightness and interest in everything is seen in her autobiography, "My Long Life," written and published in 1896, in her eighty-seventh year. After Mr. Mills' death I had a beautiful note from her; she "looked forward to seeing the selection of poems I had told her I thought of publishing." They reached her in time only for her to send, not write, a message of thanks and appreciation. She died in 1898, aged eighty-nine.

MRS. COWDEN-CLARKE to J. MILLS.

"GENOA, August 1876.

"MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—Allow me to add a few words to my husband's note to tell you how deeply we felt gratified by your delightful letter and beautiful sonnet. . . . I assure you

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 8.

that could you know the overwhelming heat in which we are now writing, and the long illness¹ from which my Charles is only just recovering, you would understand that our impulse of affectionate gratitude to you must be energetic to counter-vail the excessive languor caused by these circumstances.

“Accept most cordial good wishes. . . .—Yours faithfully and much obliged,

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.”

MRS. COWDEN-CLARKE to J. MILLS.

“VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
January 4, 1880.

“MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—I thank you very heartily for your kindly prompt reply to my note, and your writing to me a letter so full of friendship and sympathy as yours of 1st January just received. I lose no time in forwarding you a duplicate of the contents of the book-post packet which was burnt, no other than an index I have made to our ‘Shakespeare Key,’ as offering additional facility of references to each detail in the work.

“It much gratifies me to know that those two sonnets are quoted together in the book you mention—Mr. Main’s new ‘Treasury of English Sonnets.’ Your noble one holds its place next to the one it extols in our own special copy of ‘The Course of Time,’ and your charmingly appreciative review of the ‘Carminia Minima’ will be ever treasured by me. My beloved husband prized you dearly as a valued friend, of whose regard for himself he felt justly proud; and it is among my best sources of comfort to believe that his warm earthly attachments form part of his spirit’s happiness in heaven. So ardent, so beautifully loving was his nature, that I feel it must be indestructible and immortal, and it is this, besides the desire I have to emulate as far as in me lies, his hopeful, cheerful energy, which gives me courage to bear our temporary separation.

“I deeply regret to learn that our dear friend Alexander

¹ Charles Cowden-Clarke died August 1877.

Ireland has been ailing lately. . . . Pray give him and his, and accept for yourself, the cordial best wishes of yours gratefully,
 MARY COWDEN-CLARKE."

MRS. COWDEN-CLARKE to J. MILLS.

"VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
 March 9, 1880.

"MY DEAR MR. MILLS,—How can I sufficiently thank you for your most genial and kind-spirited review of our 'Shakespeare Key'—not by inflicting upon you a long letter; therefore I will make it as brief as my (alleged) womanly weakness for talking will let me.

Here I am forgetting my assurance that I would be 'brief.' Therefore, briefly, I will beg you to tell me by a single line (a post-card, with either 'no' or 'yes' will suffice) whether you possess a certain biographical sketch of my dear father, called 'Life and Labours of Vincent Novello?' because your cordial and eloquent mention of him in both your letter and review (which went to my heart) made me earnestly wish you to have this little book.—I am, yours faithfully,

"MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

"P.S.—Our kind Alexander Ireland also sent me a special copy of your charming review of our book, which will stand me in good stead with its publishers.

"Here's another (alleged—for mind, I don't allow that love of talk and postscripts belong exclusively to woman-kind) betrayal of my femininity!"

MRS. COWDEN-CLARKE to J. MILLS.

"VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
 December 1, 1883.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I have to thank you for more than one charming letter besides that of 17th September last, enclosing generously-partial verses on my grave and gay photo-

portraits, which welcome missive was forwarded to me while I was with my sister Sabilla at Carlsruhe. I fear you will have thought me horribly remiss, and what is worse, horribly insensible to the friendly charm in those dear verses. I assure you I felt it deeply and gratefully, not only what is there expressed, but also what you affectionately and touchingly tell me you purposely left unexpressed therein, and I thank you from my heart.—Yours gratefully,

" MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

"P.S.—After breakfast this morning your most graceful verses¹ on their aunt's 'Dolorosa and Giocosa' portraits were read to my two darling nieces, Portia and Valeria Gigliuccis, who were enraptured—particularly with the fascinatingly simple couplet at the close, and they immediately begged for a copy, which request was, of course, at once proudly granted. Your friends, the Florentine Gigliuccis, are, I'm happy and thankful to say, all well. . . ."

MRS. COWDEN-CLARKE to J. MILLS.

" VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
June 8, 1888.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am able to write but a line or two in acknowledgment of your kind letter of 1st inst., and your dainty 'Plaint of the Primrose.' Shame that flowers should be wrenched from their sweet uses and made to emblemise persons of whom they are anything but the types. Think of such desecration as the delicate 'rose of the spring' for unblushing Beaconsfield; modest violets for the self-seeking Buonaparte; pure lily flowers (*fleur-de-lis*) for the arrogant Bourbons! camellias for Traviatas! It is infamous and wanton wickedness, all!

"The reason of my writing so briefly to you is because I am in all the bustle of setting forth with my sister Sabilla the day after to-morrow for northern air in Germany. Sabilla has a strong fancy for hearing Wagner's 'Parsifal' at Bayreuth, so I have consented to undergo the six hours'

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 64.

performance for her sake! Think of me on the 23rd of July listening for half-a-dozen hours to that most unrestful composer's wearisome style. And, moreover, he has taken the least attractive points in Sir Percivale's 'Quest,' as depicted in the 'Mort d'Arthur' of Sir Thomas Mallory, and in the 'Holy Grail' of Tennyson. But my love for my sister far outweighs my distaste for Wagner's compositions, so I have consented, and hey for Bayreuth!

"May the summer be propitious to you and to all you love, and may many happy summers be yours, my dear and honoured friend, heartily prays,

"MARY COWDEN-CLARKE."

With little time to give to details of his children's education, the spirit of accuracy and thirst for knowledge which informed his general conversation and reading was, as Dr. Hodgson would tell them, in itself a "liberal education." For instance, he could not bear to let a word pass if any doubt as to its origin, or meaning, or the source of a quotation, was expressed. It mattered not who sat at the table, whether children or visitors, he would in such cases listen to argument and assertion, then quietly rise and slip out of the room, returning from the library, open book in hand, and, placing it before the inquirer or disputant, put his finger on the page and return to his chair. It was as they grew older, and thought expanded, that they received, and prized, the full value of his habit of mind and wide culture.

Our eldest daughter, not marrying so early as her sisters, became more closely her father's companion, sharing his reading with the sympathy of like tastes,

and this close community of spirit continued to the end. A letter written to her whilst at Miss Pipe's may have a double interest, as a specimen of fatherly counsel, and in the reference it bears to Miss Pipe herself :—

“THORNFIELD, 1867.

“MY DEAR AMY,—. . . I have no doubt that you are seriously, yet cheerfully, recognising the urgent duty of gathering into your mind as much as possible of the rich materials for growth by which you are for a short time so plentifully surrounded. You know my opinion of the importance of your taking special trouble to give food and faculty to those mental powers which in you are least tractable, and have the least spontaneous growth. The sentiment and the fancy are safe in you, and need little but regulation, but even those powers may be improved by the acquisition of systematic knowledge, and of the power of clear, continuous thought—I mean thought as distinguished from dreaming. No person known to me can assist you so much in acquiring that power as Miss Pipe, and I augur favourably from your strong avowals of admiration and regard for her. You may tell that lady, with my kind regards, that I lately heard Dr. Hodgson say that he considers his relations with her one of the happiest conditions of his life. I think this will give her a pleasure which she well deserves.

“Edgar would doubtless tell you of our smart run through the Lakes. Write to me.—Your affectionate father.”

“NORTHWOLD, April 15, 1872.

“DEAR AMY,—Clearly you inherit my unlucky temperament, and you are at the age when such things normally come into view. For some years yet you will enjoy days and nights that are dark and stormy for the sake of seeing something in the past or in the distance in marked contrast to them. Youth

of your sort (and mine that was) always has an ideal past to which it must needs have a foil in the present. I, and one or two friends of the same age, used to think this a symptom of something like genius. Perhaps, in some descendant of the fifth remove, it may prove to be such. You write in peculiar metres, not unfit for your subjects, if you will only adhere to the metres in each song, and to this end a few hours' study of prosody would not be thrown away. Rhythm never spoiled music. Try a cheerful daylight subject, and stick to the time of it. That will be an *experimentum crucis!* You will have, of course, to put aside for the nonce the natural melancholy of youth.—Your affectionate Papa."

"August 4, 1883.

"DEAR AMY,—Thanks for the sonnet, and wish I had anything better than sympathy wherewith to quit the debt; but the wind will not blow whither it doth not list, and for the present I am dumb and 'dumm.' Now try to escape from the sonnet-metre mesh. I have relinquished *sonnetti* for the present, or I fear I may be able to write nothing else. Indeed, I am not good for anything now but tramping in fresh air. We go again to Matlock in a few days.

"Could you indite a cheerful ditty in triplets, or the like? The universe creaks sadly and wants a little lubrication; the process would do you good.

"*I know*, like you, what it is to want sleep. Find it at Scarborough.—Yours affectionately, J. M."

"6 PLASTERION TERRACE, RHYL,
August 15, 1885.

"DEAR AMY,—Your note, with enclosure, was sent after me to this place. Thanks; the sonnet is a great improvement on the first four of your lines, and is, in fact, very beautiful in music and sentiment; so much so, that one longs to see you touch in the last bits of technical finish (some other phrase for 'leaping impetuously,' and a better rhyme than 'peace' for 'ease' and 'seas,' &c.). The million sonnets of the day are

not worth the care, but yours *is*. As for me, I have hung my battered old harp on the chandelier of my library at Northwold, and run away hither for a prosaic dose of ozone and laziness. But the demon of economic controversy has followed me, and I have had to write six successive letters on bi-metallism within the last fortnight. To send you these would be a poor return for your *spirituelle* sonnet. I can only, therefore, send love to you and all.—And I am your affectionate *père*."

"MANCHESTER, October 19, 1885.

"... Your 'Marriage' sonnet has been seen by Mr. Mackennal, who liked it much. I think it the best you have done so far as I know. The latest sonnet, 'Science and Poetry,' also shows gathering force, though it would be the better for some little constructive changes."

"January 18, 1886.

"DEAR AMY,—This morning we have snow and a complete winter landscape, which might inspire some of you poets with an immortal ode, or at least a crystal sonnet. There is, of course, the difficulty of turning the subject into a song, that it is all a *white silence*. A male poet could not do it; but your sex have more skill and experience in translating silence into speech. Try your powers: I won't snowball you with criticism. There are not many memorable things said or sung about snow, but you remember the felicity of—

'Like a snowflake on the river,
A moment seen, then gone for ever.'

Have you ever observed the effect of snow on the respective physiognomies of trees? The flakes still float and fall over the grimy street, but the bank bell rings, and I must away.—
Yours affectionately,

J. M."

"NORTHWOLD, October 28, 1888.

"DEAR AMY,—Your letter of 17th was chiefly interesting and grateful to me as a sign of the persistence of your old vigour, though I sympathise strongly in your special attraction to the course of study set forth in the syllabus you sent. In the line of your *chasse* you will find some tough, quickset hedges, and I wish you well through them. I refer mainly to the *cruces* or problems of thought you will confront; but I can hardly say much of the imagination as a mode of thinking—can, in fact, scarcely realise that 'barbarous faculty' under the scalpel of analysis as a sort of fetch-and-carry function—a process to be watched and vivisected and recorded in the books of this hyper-analytical age. There are a few rebellious things yet left that vaporise and vanish at the touch of the dissecting table. The imagination is one of them. The attempt, however, may help you as a mental exercise. . . . None of our four innocents here seem inclined to break their mental teeth upon the hard nuts you prefer, but I shall be glad to see all that you do in the matter. I have Marlowe and Goethe.

"Your reference to the sonnet¹ I wrote at Llandudno shows that the imagination is not a very reliable mode of thinking. Having for the time being no head of my own, I left all to the two heads of the Great and Little Orme. And they served me well.—Your affectionate Pater,

J. M."

"October 16, 1893.

"DEAR AMY,—We have just returned from Blackpool, and I lose no time in replying to your queries about the sonnet. I have been puzzling myself with plaguey alternatives, for I like none of yours better than the original version. One could talk these things over better than write. I suggest a change in the fifth and sixth lines, because music (a thing concerning the aural, not the optic nerve) cannot be 'hid from human sight,' unless you refer to a sheet of notes or a visible fiddle and flute. The sestett is beautiful, and I profane it not with a touch.

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 13.

"And wild birds clamour to the deep refrain" is a fine quotable line.

"I like the sonnet much, even judging it esoterically, as I am compelled to do. I wish Blackpool suited you. Its winds are rudely renovating.—Yours affectionately,

"J. M."

"THE NIGHT WIND.

A murmur at my window in the night,
 A broken ballad, in a tongue unknown,
 Wailing aloft, then falling to a moan,
 Between the dying and the dawning light.
 Stay, vagrant music, till I learn aright
 How blend those human voices with thine own,
 From age to age re-echoing every tone
 Of long-forgotten sorrow and delight !

Cool now my fever with a sound of rain,
 Or sweep my thoughts, that sick of sickness be,
 Out where the salt gale frets a rolling sea,
 And wild birds clamour to the deep refrain !
 God's lullaby, thou art,—for it is He
 Sings us to sleep, and hushes all our pain.

AMY MILLS-WATSON."

"SCIENCE AND POETRY.

Mysterious sisters ! great revealers twain
 Of one sole glory ! Some, presumptuous, dare
 Deny your holy kinship, and declare
 Ye rivals, scorning each the other's gain ;
 But those strong spirits, who by toil attain
 To clearer heights, bear witness how ye share
 Your empire, making each the other fair
 With her own beauty, over men to reign.

Science of rythmic order frames the laws
 That shape the immortal poem, but the best
 And loftiest charm wherewith man's heart she draws,
 Is the life-mystery that eludes his quest,
 From the deep seas, or woods, or midnight skies,
 Gazing through dark, unfathomable eyes.

A. M.-W."

"A BRIDAL FORECAST.

Frail voyager upon the perilous sea
 Of human love, launching on that great deep
 Thy heart's rich cargo, hopest thou to keep
 Beneath all skies a tranquil mind and free?
 Bright are the waters, tossed in sunlight glee,
 Or murmuring mingled music in their sleep ;
 But skies may darken, bitter blasts may sweep,
 And grief's wild, hurrying tempest beat on thee !

Is shipwreck darker doom than stagnant ease ?
 Though love risk pain, love with all risk be mine,
 So shall my heart, when darkness God decrees,
 Ride out the storm until the morning shine,
 Dropping her anchor through these perilous seas
 Of human love, deep into love divine.

A. M.-W."

" November 1895.

" DEAR AMY,— . . . I do not write much now, and almost feel the pen a strange tool to work with. If you keep up your literary activity you must make up for my defection. You must keep your mind open to poetical impulse, as the sailor whistles for the wind. Come over when you can, long before the snowdrops.

J. M."

CHAPTER V

IN July 1887 we had a visit from our old American friend Frederick Douglass, who spent a week with us on his way home from Rome. What a fine-looking old man he had become!—a cultivated gentleman. He had so looked forward to bringing his second wife, Helen—a Washington lady—to see me, but a summons to the expected deathbed of her mother prevented this, and Frederick, after seeing her off at Liverpool, came on to us, and to complete a round of visits to his old friends and their children.

It was the Jubilee year, and we—he and I—paid several visits to the Exhibition in Manchester. What long walks and talks we had—recalling the days of his travail, when he came to my father's house, poor, and lacking everything—yet how rich in spirit! He recalled how a few Englishwomen bought him from his master, and presented him with himself.¹ As he bade us good-bye at the station, giving me his hand, he said, “You know at least three fingers belong to you—your mother paid for them!” He joked to hide the deep feeling that he could not utter.

¹ Appendix, p. 397.

It is a great privilege to have come into close and friendly touch with such God's noblemen as Kossuth, Douglass, and Elihu Burritt. Just before leaving England Douglass sent me the following letter:—

F. DOUGLASS to MRS. J. MILLS.

"DUBLIN, July 24, 1887.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I am happy in the receipt of your letter, c/o Mr. Webb, the worthy son of R. D. Webb, whom I knew very well so many years ago. I will read to Mr. Webb that part of your letter in which you refer to him. . . . I fear that I will not be able to come out to Bowdon again before leaving. I wish you and your daughter Nellie could have some errand down to Liverpool on the 3rd August, and that I could see you once more before sailing. I am now visiting, not my old friends, but the children of my old friends, and well do they fill up the chasm made by the absence of their dear parents.

"I shall be in Liverpool one week from to-morrow, which is Monday. If you do not come to Liverpool on the 3rd, and can find time to send me a line of farewell, it will be highly appreciated. I do not forget, and shall not soon forget, the pleasant hours spent at your dear home, and among your loved ones. I am writing this in haste, with a houseful of company waiting for me to come into the room.

"My very best regards to your daughter Nellie.

"Sincerely and gratefully yours,

"FREDK. DOUGLASS."

In 1888 Professor Blackie spent two days with us, bringing as usual an atmosphere of cheery brightness, his voice resounding through the house. In the evening we sat, a charmed circle (especially the young people) in the drawing-room, whilst he told us one story after another. At last he gave us

"Jenny Geddes," and suiting his action to the last word, took up a footstool and flung it across the room. It just caught me sharply below the knee ; it was nothing, but as he came up, full of apologies, I, by way of a joking revenge, limped painfully towards the door, leaning on his proffered arm : looking up at his face, however, so full of pitiful concern, I gave it up, and began to laugh ; instantly taking me by both hands, he danced me round and round the room, to the great amusement of the rest of the party.

After his return home I received the following kindly note :—

W. L. S. BLACKIE to MRS. J. MILLS.

"9 DOUGLAS CRESCENT,
EDINBURGH, March 25, 1888.

"MY DEAR MRS. MILLS,—Here I am in my Scottish snugger again ; and looking gratefully back on the pleasant sunshine of gracious hospitality which fell upon me as I saw for the first time the outspread greenery of Cheshire. I be-think myself to send you a slight memento of my visit in the shape of a book. You seemed to have a pleasant recollection of Oban, and its picturesque vicinity ; so I have chosen for you a book that may help to enable you to look into the *soul* of those regions of which the great majority of tourists skim only the *surface*.

"With best regards to your accomplished lord, and all the fireside.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

"W. L. S. BLACKIE."

1889.—This year the bank having far outgrown its original borders, erected the fine building which

stands across the top of King Street. At the close of the same year Mr. Mills retired from the general managership, and joined the directorate.

1891.—When the statue of John Bright was in course of erection at Rochdale, Mr. Mills was requested by the committee to write for it an inscription in verse. At first he was rather unwilling, saying he “never could write to order; the very consciousness of that putting a drag upon the wheel.” However, he sent them an inscription, saying, “He was not quite satisfied with it himself, but such as it was he sent it, advising that they should consult some authority whose opinion would be valuable and unbiassed.” It was forwarded to Mr. Gladstone, from whom the following reply was received :—

W. E. GLADSTONE to GEO. PETRIE.

“ 18 PARK LANE, May 1, 1891.

“ DEAR SIR,—Without much confidence in my own judgment, I am of opinion that the verses you have sent me as a possible inscription for the statue of Mr. Bright have the signal merits of conciseness, propriety, and force.

“ I think, however, that in the case of such an inscription on such a statue, the standard ought to be raised very high in respect to diction as well as to thought, and that there are one or two expressions in the lines which perhaps do not quite come up to that standard.

“ I would therefore suggest for your consideration whether you would submit them to the review of some sympathetic and at the same time discerning critic, who would pass his judgment upon them.

"If you ask me to name the sort of person I have in view, I would specify Mr. Hutton, of the *Spectator*, whose critical faculty stands very high, and who had every sympathy with Mr. Bright in the opinions which mainly governed his public conduct from the year 1886 onwards.—With all good wishes, I remain, dear sir, yours very faithfully,
W. E. GLADSTONE.
"GEO. PETRIE, Esq."

The inscription, however, was sent on to Mr. Morley, the gist of whose reply was "that if verses were to be inscribed, he approved of these;" but he asked, "Why not rather select a passage from one of Mr. Bright's own speeches?" This was decided upon, with Mr. Mills' full approval.

**"INSCRIPTION PROPOSED TO BE PLACED ON THE PEDESTAL OF
THE JOHN BRIGHT STATUE AT ROCHDALE.**

Truth touched his tongue with flame to rouse the land,
And steeled his thews to strike for freedom's cause,
Till Famine, born of greed and lawless laws,
Should die, and curse no more our British strand.

When War, with her red record, fades from sight,
And Peace for ever soothes with tranquil ray
The fervid noon of freedom's golden day,
His memory shall burn through all the light."

May 1891.

The chief point of interest in this incident is in Mr. Gladstone's letter, and the circumstances under which it was written—the very sending of the inscription to him as one sure to give an unbiased judgment, shows a faith in his high character, his

fine spirit, that is to the credit of the men of Rochdale. How truly this faith was justified, is shown by the marvellous delicacy of the wording and the absence of any vestige of sore feeling in regard to one whose defection was so severe and unlooked-for a blow!

In August 1892 Mr. Mills felt keenly the retirement of his ever-loyal friend and trusty counsellor, Mr. Armitage, from the chairmanship of the bank. His own strength now visibly failing, he also, at the annual meeting in 1894, addressed the shareholders, giving up to them the trust they had for over twenty years reposed in him.

How thoroughly he discharged that trust is shown by the fact that when he left it the bank had thirty-five branches, paid a 12 per cent. dividend, and its shares (£10 paid) were sold at £30.

One after another our fledgelings took wing, and built nests for themselves—some near the old tree—some farther afield (one son in California); and the calm so grateful to advanced years, became ours. But if the home circle lessened, grandchildren began to grow thick on the sod, and the Christmas tree became larger and more heavily laden with toys, the distribution of which was to the last a delight to the grandfather. We elders, too, came in for special gifts; much prized was that of one Christmas, when our children presented us with two illuminated cards—one “To the Father,” a sonnet, written by



his eldest daughter (afterwards altered by her to the Dedicatory Lines in "Vox Humana"); the other, "To Mother," verses written by our third daughter Lily, of which we give two stanzas:—

"TO MOTHER

Thou truly art the guiding star
Of all our lives; and near or far
Thy children steer by thee their course,
In every trouble their resource.

Mother-love, by nothing daunted,
No other love, however vaunted,
Is so divine and pure as thine,
Or can with ray so selfless shine!"

Had one been writing fifty years ago of the Christmas tree, few readers would then have realised what was meant. What new joy and brightness has its advent thrown over the sombre fashion in which Englishmen are said to "take their pleasure!"

So far as regards my own family, my eldest brother and I, on our return in 1847 from a long stay in Germany, introduced the custom amongst us; and from that time it has never failed to put forth its fruits throughout succeeding generations. The Geist of the Christ-Kind must surely be its vivifying sap; for, from the hearths of the rich and well-to-do its roots have spread and spread, until the children of the poor, even

the little outcasts of the slums, know the meaning and the joy of the Christmas tree. And the hearts of more fortunate children learn to glow and expand with the joy of working to make gifts for their sisters and brothers of the Sunday-school, the Orphanage, and the Workhouse, for the "Tiny Tims" of to-day—"God bless them!" The "Larger" Light here grows ever clearer and clearer, and the "Glory of it shall cover the earth—to the ends thereof."

1895–96.—And now there came a time of restful decline, with fading powers and memory, but ever clear intellect. Nature and music, books and grandchildren, a solace and delight. Still, each fine day, the quiet stroll into the park or fields, bringing home, as of old, with joy and triumph, the first spring flowers, hands filled with lush blue-bells. Then, later, with "saddened mien," the drooping harebell, the "last of the summer."

One Thursday evening in September 1896, we, resting from a short walk, "sat in a fair porch,"¹ and watched, for the last time, the fading glow of a glorious autumn sunset. At sunset on Saturday the 26th, after a few hours' illness, he quietly slept away, to wake in the Light of the City that hath no need of the sun, for "the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof."

¹ "Vox Humana," p. 78.

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X

IN the Altringham God's-Acre stands a headstone inscribed as follows :—

WILLIE

7 MONTHS OLD. DIED 1867.

“ Go, floweret, where no bleak wind blows,
And bloom with Sharon's deathless Rose.”

JOHN MILLS

BORN DECEMBER 16, 1821. OBIT SEPTEMBER 26, 1896.

AGED 75.

“ Roused from Earth's perplexing dream,
Vexed no more by things that seem ;
What was here thy dim Ideal,
Now thou know'st, the only Real.
Life and Death transfigured shine
In a tender Light Divine.”

(The first two lines written by the father, the six last by
“Filia.”)

CLOSE OF A SERMON

BY THE REV. DR. MACKENNAL

On Rom. i. 16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel."

"I had chosen this text for this morning several days, even some weeks, ago. And to-day we have to make reverent, grateful mention of one who served this church very loyally, very affectionately, very faithfully for many years ; and whom, almost suddenly, God called to himself yesterday week.

"Mr. Mills was a man of many gifts, united in a somewhat rare combination. Of strenuous nature, finding a congenial sphere for his energies in the responsibilities of banking—itself one of the most exacting services to which a man can be called, and in which he did a man's work—he was also a severe thinker, of the old Manchester school in politics and economics, to whose traditions of humane sentiment and exact, even hard, common sense he was always true. He was a man of unswerving patriotic integrity ; the last survivor of the little band to which Dr. M'Kerrow and Alexander Ireland belonged, and Dr. Dunckley, so recently removed from us—the founders of the *Manchester Examiner*, which did so good a work, and helped to prepare a constituency and lay a foundation for the eminent service which the *Guardian* is rendering to-day. He had the heart of a poet, as well as an unusual power of literary expression ; he had also an artist's sensibility and constructive impulse, as we know well, whose song he led, for many years, in this house of the Lord. . . .

"How tender his sentiment of piety was I recall in a pathetic incident. I came into the church one Sunday morning while he was playing the opening voluntary. I am

not sensitive to music ; but I was struck with the mingled triumph and pathos of the strains. I asked him, when service was over, what he had been playing. ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘I was just developing a theme which had occurred to me.’ In a few minutes I heard from some one else, that, the evening before, his eldest son had been, with some difficulty, saved from drowning in Rostherne Mere. I understood then that this had been Mr. Mills’ way of expressing his gratitude for the deliverance.

“We shall miss him from the communion which follows this service ; but I shall never cease to remember how often he joined with us. ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.’”

Sunday, October 4, 1896.

LETTER to FILIA from MISS PIPE.

“Your lines¹ to your father have the beauty of adequacy—they are perfectly fit and true. It was in his eyes that I first observed that strange, wonderful, impressive phenomenon of the ‘deeper fires.’ If one said a word which went below the surface and touched him, those ‘fires’ were stirred. The flame leapt up and the eyes were aglow—this, and a distinct yet kindred radiance shining in the whole countenance have taught the painters to put aureoles around the heads of the saints. It is not a symbol merely, it is an effort after literal expression—letter and symbol combined.

“LIMPSFIELD, SURREY,
Christmas Day, 1897.”

¹ Dedicatory Sonnet in “Vox Humana.”

APPENDIX.**I.**

“THRUTCHED.”—Page 65.

“Thrutch” is a standard Lancashire term, meaning to push, shove, or press on.

II.

HYMN TUNES.—Page 94.

The Methodist New Connexion Hymn Book contains four tunes of Mr. Mills’ composition, viz. : “Submission,” “I horn-field,” “Elliot,” and “Bonar,” the latter an especial favourite.

III.

“MOCK JEWS.”—Page 96.

This refers to the “Johanna Southcotes” sect, who had their head-quarters at Ashton-under-Lyne. They built three houses—one at each of the principal approaches to the town—to be ready for the reception of the quickly expected Messiah, from whichever point of the compass He should arrive.

IV.

LETTERS from ELIHU BURRITT to MISS PETRIE.
—Page 128.

“EXETER, September 26, 1846.

“MA CHÈRE ISABELLA,—. . . I hope to visit Rochdale about the middle of October. I deem myself happy to have such an active coadjutor as you. Friend Crosfield has not sent me one

name yet, while you will soon send me a lot of them. I forward you two of those Pledge leaves. I own up to the American fashion of preferring a request *negatively* or interrogatively. Friend Clapp is in London, intending to visit Paris soon. I think there was but little of the spirit of brotherhood in the unity of the Alliance. I think it was an alliance of several religious sects to destroy another. This is a grand time to live and labour—never was life so dear to me as now; the field is large, but the labourers few. You can do a great deal to promote this great work of fraternising the world. Another American question—Why will not you engage in this enterprise heart and soul? . . . You have a good field in Rochdale all to yourself. . . . Do not cut your letters short. Write me a good long one—don't mind what Crosfield says—he is an incorrigible old bachelor. . . . Please direct to me, Victoria Hotel, Bristol. Write me a long letter, and if you have filled your Pledge leaf, I should be glad to receive it, so as to forward the names to America by the next steamer. Je vous laisse le main.—Adieu, votre frère,

“ELIHU BURRITT.”

“27 NEW BROAD STREET, LONDON,
October 21, 1846.

“DEAR ISABELLA,—I should like to [be] in debt to you for a thousand of your dear little notes. . . . You have enjoyed a real privilege in listening to the energetic eloquence of Frederick Douglass. The first time I ever heard him was at Bristol. I never attended such a meeting. The vast audience seemed overpowered by the strength of his genius. . . . I suppose he has gone from you now. I send you herewith another Pledge leaf, which I hope you may be able to fill without much effort. I want to get 3000 signatures by the first of November, as the steamers will then sail only once a month. I expect to be in Leeds next week, and may be in Rochdale the week after, but cannot tell. I have concluded to suspend public speaking almost entirely, as it is not my forte, and is not the most efficient way of promoting my objects. You will owe me two notes for this.—Adieu, ma chère, ELIHU BURRITT.”

"DARLINGTON, November 6, 1846.

"CHÈRE ISABELLA,—My volume of Brotherhood is swelling daily. Fifteen hundred in this country have already subscribed with their hands to this Pledge of Peace, and as many in America have done the same ere this. I do hope to see Rochdale one of these days. I cannot tell exactly when. . . . You are good and kind to divide me up between yourself and dear Esther Bright. It will be like living alternately in both ends of an Eden, each with an Eve in it. . . . I expect to be here until the 10th. . . . I lecture in Liverpool on the 28th, whence I shall probably return to Manchester, when I shall enjoy the pleasure of seeing the Rochdale friends. Do be so good as to write me in Newcastle if John Bright is at home. You must excuse this scrawl, as I am writing about one hundred letters a week. . . .—Votre frère,

"ELIHU BURRITT."

"5 BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT, LONDON,
July 3, 1847.

"MA CHÈRE ISABEL,—I thought you had buried me out of remembrance entirely, but your short sweet letter is evidence to the contrary. I am indeed happy to have an occasional place in your thoughts, as you are the first young lady I met in England, almost, who gave me sympathy and encouragement. I should like to visit Rochdale before I go on the Continent, rather to see you again, than with the hope of doing much good. The fact is, I have been saving my visit to Rochdale to some time when I was down in spirits, and needing extra allowance of sympathy and kindness. I lean upon you for nearly all I hope of co-operation from Rochdale.—Sincerely yours,

ELIHU BURRITT."

"15 NEW BOND STREET,
December 15, 1847.

"DEAR ISABEL,—You did right indeed to believe it was not like Elihu Burritt to forget the first sister friend he made in England. I have been thus silent under the misappre-

hension that you were *married*, and gone from Rochdale, 'to parts unknown' to me. I heard that you were in the Beulah of Matrimony, awaiting a summons to that blissful land. And after all, you are still in the common world of life! Good! I will write to you the same as ever now; unless you restrict me to 'once in six months.' . . . I go to Bristol on Monday next. . . . I hope Isabel will not let this movement die out of her heart, though all Rochdale forget it. . . .—Affectionately, ELIHU BURRITT."

V.

LETTERS from FREDERICK DOUGLASS to MISS PETRIE.

—Page 129.

"EDINBURGH, October 22, 1846.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I snatch my pen and a few flying moments to fulfil my promise to write informing you of my movements. I left Liverpool on Tuesday at four o'clock, and reached here yesterday at four o'clock P.M. At seven o'clock last evening Messrs. Lloyd-Garrison and Thompson and myself held a large meeting in this city. I shall remain here and hold meetings in the vicinity for a week or more, and then return to England, and set in for a regular campaign during the remaining autumn and winter. I shall of course see you soon after my return to England, as I probably visit Rochdale directly on my return. Please make my warm regards to your dear mother and father.—I am, dear Isabella, in great haste, very sincerely yours,

"OLIVE F. DOUGLASS."

"WREXHAM, November 7, 1846.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I have learned with much gratification the interest which you have taken and the help given in my redemption from slavery. I little thought when at your house that a way would be so speedily opened for my ransom. Your dear mother must enjoy it much, since she was so deeply solicitous for my safety, and besought me so

strongly to remain in this country and have my family brought over to me. Of course you are aware that I intend to make your father's house my home on Tuesday night. In haste.—
Yours sincerely,

F. DOUGLASS."

VI.

RECENT DISCOVERY of LETTERS WRITTEN by E. BURRITT.

—Page 206.

In the *Manchester Guardian* of August 26, 1899, there appeared a paragraph recounting the interesting discovery of some old love-letters of Mr. Burritt's, which had been "rescued from a paper-mill in America," and were said to have been "written to an English girl whom he had *known as a child*, and now wished to marry." The account was taken from the *New York Times* of August 12. For the moment, it was surmised that these letters could only have been addressed to "Margaret;" but the date (1855) precluded that idea. Knowing that my sister was the *only* English girl he had known "as a child" whom later on he had expressed a wish to marry, I procured a copy of the *New York Times*, and from the account there given, discovered that the "child" theory was founded on a mistake—the four letters being addressed, in 1855, to "Emma," whom he had met for the first time on the occasion of his very brief visit to England in that year. The letters must have been returned at the conclusion of this short episode.

VII.

HALL'S "HISTORY OF NANTWICH."—Page 209.

Mr. James Hall's book, which was published in 1883, is delightful and interesting reading. He had a great advantage over many compilers of local histories in the occurrence of so many noteworthy events, dating from Doomsday, such as the attacks of the Welsh borderers in 1400, the twenty days' fire in 1583, the Parliamentarian War in 1642, &c. &c. The graphic descriptions are taken from numerous sources, and are skilfully and carefully arranged.

VIII.

NANTWICH WATCHMEN.—Page 216.

“Until about 1832, six watchmen walked their nightly rounds from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M., carrying with them a spring rattle (a bell in the earliest days), a bludgeon, and a lantern. When the police came, and gas was introduced into the town, the band of watchmen was dispensed with, with the exception of John Sutton, who continued as watchman for the High Town until 1868. He was a ‘character;’ he would cry, ‘Parst ten, a fine starry night,’ as the case might be, after which he would be found in some passage or corner of High Street, muffled in a topcoat, his eyes peering from under an old wideawake, his hands encased in big gloves, and the bull’s-eye lantern fixed in his belt. In these retreats he was always ready to relate how many years it was since he had been in bed at night; how many robberies he had prevented; and how cleverly he once captured a gang of thieves in Well Lane. He was called ‘Old Jack Sutton,’ and died in 1870, having been watchman over fifty years.”—Hall’s *History of Nantwich*.

IX.

OLD COTTON-MILL, NANTWICH.—Page 216.

In Mr. Hall’s “History of Nantwich” I find a confirmation of these traditions. He says: “In ancient times a corn-mill was an important accessory to a manor; the earliest mention of the Nantwich corn-mill is 1228. In 1528 it was purchased by William Church and Sir Philip Egerton, who provided in his will for two Chantrey priests to be maintained out of his mill in Nantwich.

“In 1650 Baron Cholmondeley bought it. In 1789 the corn-mill was changed into a factory for cotton-spinning, worked chiefly by apprentices from the workhouse, and even from Ireland. After being worked as a cotton-mill for eighty-five years, it became once more, in 1874, a corn-mill.”

X.

FORTIFIED WITH MUD WALLS.—Page 227.

“‘They fortified all round the town with strong trenches and mud walls of cloddes of earth.’”—Hall’s *History of Nantwich*.

XI.

NONCONFORMITY IN NANTWICH.—Page 228.

Puritanism had spread rapidly in Cheshire during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and Nonconformist ministers had their “solemn assemblies” and their “glorious monthly exercises at Nantwich, Northwich, Knutsford, &c., in and after 1627.” In 1686 Matthew Henry preached in Pepper Street Chapel the funeral sermon of his friend the Rev. Samuel Lawrence, who for many years had been the pastor of the congregation worshipping there, and of whose learning and beautiful character Mr. Hall gives a most interesting sketch. It was in Pepper Street Chapel that Matthew Henry preached his last sermon, in 1714, the day before his death, which occurred suddenly at the house of his host.

XII.

BEQUEST OF MR. PHILIP BARKER.—Page 229.

Mr. Philip Barker, who died March 11, 1898, aged eighty-four, left his house, “The Grove,” and land adjoining, with a sum of about £23,000, for the founding of a “good grammar school” on a broad and unsectarian basis. The trustees of this bequest are all well-known gentlemen of high standing. Of these the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, Mr. R. D. Darbyshire, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Mr. Harry Rawson, the Rev. J. E. Odgers, and the Rev. H. E. Dowson, are the original and life trustees. Provision is also made by the bequest for a certain number of foundationers.

XIII.

STATUE TO F. DOUGLASS.—Page 377.

Frederick Douglass died in February 1895. On the 9th of June 1899 a statue to his memory was unveiled in Rochester, N.Y., by Governor Theodore Roosevelt, who in his speech said: "As Rochester was honoured by his life, so is she honoured by his grave and his monument—two visible memorials of a great man and an honourable life." The *Rochester Herald* of 10th June says: "Rochester has had but one public monument, that of the heroic Lincoln. That of Douglass is now added. The two statues—Lincoln and Douglass, the great emancipator and the great champion of freedom—will serve as an inspiration to the rising generation."

INDEX

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>ACTON, Henry, 141
 Acton, Roger, 141, 142
 Ainsworth, Harrison, birthplace of,
 97
 Alliance Bank, 293, 301, 317
 Althorp Library, 102
 American Civil War, 301
 Anti-Corn-Law League, 74, 77,
 103, 125, 132, 133
 Anti-State Church Association, 12
 Appendix, 385
 Armitage, William, 318, 382
 Ashley, Lord, 107
 Ashton, Walter, 93
 Ashton-under-Lyne, 87 <i>et seq.</i>
 Ashworth, George, 13, 131
 Ashworth-Hallet, Mrs., 77
 Autographs, 22, 267, 346</p> <p>BAILLIE Street Methodist Church,
 133, 189
 Baines, Edward, 317
 Balfour, Clara Lucas, 21, 204, 255
 Ballantyne, T., 137, 180, 193
 Bamford, Samuel, 97, 194
 Band meetings, 55
 Bank Charter Act, 302, 327, 336
 Bank House, Nantwich, 209, 219
 "Bank Top," Ashton-under-Lyne,
 87
 Banker-Poets, 347-48
 <i>Bankers' Magazine</i>, 293
 Barker, J. D., 93, 95
 — Philip, 229</p> | <p>Barton, Miss, and Kindergarten
 work, 239
 — W., 15, 16
 Bateman, Thomas, 241-44, 264
 Bazaar, Anti-Corn-Law, 132
 Bazley, Sir Thomas, 222
 Beard, Dr., 20
 Behrens, Mrs. L., 171, 309
 Ben Rhydding, 80, 157-66, 268
 Bentham, Jeremy, 100, 112
 Bibles, subscribing for, 42
 Biometallism. <i>See</i> Mills, John,
 Correspondence
 Birmingham Musical Festival, 280
 "Black Friday," 301
 Blackett, "Aunt," 61-64
 Blackie, Professor, 355, 378-79
 Blackstone Edge, 7, 13, 43, 65
 Blankets, Bury, 48
 Blyth, E. K., 142, 275, 278, 282
 — "Bobbin, Tim," 57
 Bonalby Tower, 355-57
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 16-18
 Books, scarcity of, 100, 101
 Boote, James, Weston Hall, 230
 Booth, George (defender of Nant-
 wich), 228
 — Thomas, 26, 32
 Boswell's "Johnson," 62, 248
 Bourne, Hugh, 243
 Bowdon, Cheshire, 299 <i>et seq.</i>
 <i>Bradshaw's Journal</i>, 97, 128
 Bread Riots, 104
 Bright, Esther, 145-52</p> |
|--|--|

- Bright, Jacob, Jun., 110, 127, 133, 141, 146, 153, 255
 — Jacob, Sen., 15, 16, 75
 — John, 15, 25, 39, 60, 76, 89, 137, 151, 380
 — Margaret. *See* Lucas, Mrs.
 — Priscilla. *See* M'Laren, Mrs.
 — Sophia, 77
- Brimstone matches, 5, 8
- Brisbane Courier*, 61
- British and Foreign Bible Society, 240
- British Quarterly Review*, 248, 275, 284, 286
- Buckingham, J. Silk, 150
- Burns, Wordsworth and, 117
- Burritt, Elihu, 21, 22, 126, 128, 133, 200, 204, 206
- Burton, Jim, 195
- Butts, the, Rochdale, 63
- Byron, Lord, the first, 228
- CADER Idris, 268, 272, 275, 290, 293
- Cameron, Mr., 304
- Carlyle, Mrs., 176
 — Thomas, 107-9, 140, 149, 151
- Cavour, Dr. Hodgson on, 320, 322
- Chamber of Commerce. *See* Manchester
- Chambers, Robert, 141, 312
- Chambers's Journal*, 49
- Chartist Riots, 106, 125, 130
- Chesham Lane, homestead at, 47
- Choir training, 240, 309
- Cholera in Ireland, 125
 — at Nantwich, 209, 259
- Cholmondeley, Marquis of, 241
- Christmas tree, advent of the, 383
- Church Rates, 14, 75, 104, 236
- Churches Mansions, Nantwich, 225
- Civil War, American, 301
 — Nantwich in the, 216, 228
- Clarendon Club, 316
- Clarke, Mrs. Bright-, 61
- Class meetings, 54
- Clayden, P. W., 12
- "Cliffe," the, Wybunbury, 246
- Clog-dances, 106
- Clog-shoon, 183, 236
- Clowes, William, 243
- Cobden, Richard, 77, 103, 107, 141, 153
- Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection," 149, 170
- Collier's Works. *See* Dialect
- Coniston, 118, 190
- Corbett, Reginald, 233
 — Richard, 232
- Corelli, Marie, writings of, 25
- Corn Laws, Repeal of. *See* Anti-Corn-Law League
- Cotton and coronets, 247
 — famine, 301
 — mill at Nantwich, 216, 295
- Covent Garden League Bazaar, 132
- Cowden-Clarke, Charles and Mary, 278, 365-70
- Craik, Mrs., 158
- "Cranford," 249
- Crawford, Sharman, 150
- "Credit Cycles," 330, 332, 339
- Crompton, J. H. S., 352
- Cronkeyshaw Moor, 68, 133
- Crown Inn, Nantwich, 226, 241
- Curwen, J. Spencer, letter from, 284
 — Spencer, 240
- DAVIDSON, Rev. Dr., 153
- Dawson, George, 109-11, 249, 250
- Dialect, 29-34, 43-46, 52, 57
- Dinner parties, old-fashioned, 232
- Disestablishment, 79
- Dobell, Sydney, 348
- Dominies, Lancashire, 88-90
- Douglass, F., 79, 128, 276, 377-78

INDEX

- Dunckley, Dr. ("Verax"), 137
 255, 348
 Dunham Park, 300
- ECKETT, Rev. R., 79
- Education, National (Foster's Bill), 305. *See also* Lancashire Public School Association and Mills, John
 " Elijah," the, 137, 176, 182
 Elliott, Ebenezer, 111
 Embroideries, Irish, 60
 Emerson, R. W., 143, 180, 184,
 250-54, 345
 "Enchiridion," by A. Ireland, 101
 Equitable Pioneer Society, founding of, 103
 Espinasse, F., 143, 153, 180, 184
Examiner and Times. *See* Manchester
 Exhibition of 1851, 21, 133, 204
- FACTORY Children, 105, 195
 Fairchild, H. J., 312, 313-16
 Famine, Cotton, 301
 — Irish, 60, 125
 Fenian alarms, 307
 " Festus," 181, 199, 222
 " Filia," letters to, 371-76;
 sonnets by, 375-76
 Forster's Education Bill, 305
 Fothergills, the, 13, 24
 Foxholes Lane, 66, 68
 Free Churches, federation of, 38
 — Libraries, 101, 246
 " Frog-i'-th'-Mouth," 259
 Fry, Elizabeth, Carlyle and, 151
- GARFIELD, President, sonnet to,
 361
 Garibaldi, 278
 Gibson, Milner, 77
 Gladstone, W. E., letter from,
 380
- Glasgow Argus*, 119
 Glove-making at Nantwich, 257
 Goethe, 167, 169
 Greenbank, home of the Bright family, 68, 71, 126, 146
- HADFIELD, Mr., and National Education question, 305
 Halle's concerts, 310
 Harlock, Samuel, 229, 246, 263
 Hawkestone, 235
 Healey Dell, 65, 148
 Herford, Laura, 161
 Hewitt, David, 28, 37
 Hill, Octavia, 158
 Hiring day at Nantwich, 256
 Hodgson, W. B., 138, 140, 143,
 162, 194, 212, 350, 356-59
 — letters from, 203, 325, 327,
 330
 — letters to, 202, 203, 210, 248,
 268-76, 281-82, 288, 289, 293,
 303-8, 318-24, 326, 328-30, 331,
 349, 351, 352, 353, 357, 359
 Hodnet, Bishop Heber's old home at, 232
 Home life, 5 *et seq.*
 — Rule, Jacob Bright and, 127
 Horton, Richard, Nantwich, 228,
 257
 Hudson, Captain, mesmerist, 20
 Hunt, Leigh, 140, 205
 Hutchinson family, 150
 Hydropathy, 80, 259
- IHAZ, Colonel, 262
 Inscription for Bright's statue in Rochdale, 380-81
- Ireland, Alexander, 101, 111, 137,
 140-43, 171, 180, 189, 205, 251,
 263-64, 300, 311-16, 347
 — Mrs., 142
 Irish famine of 1845, 60, 125
 Italy, tour in, 278

- JEVONS, W. S., 301, 318, 333, 361-62
 — letters from, 336-41, 353-54, 360, 361
 Jewsbury, Geraldine, 151
 "Johnson," Boswell's, 62, 248
 Johnson, W. R., 246
- KEISALL, Henry, 63
 Kindergarten system, 239
 Kipling, Francis, 21
 Kitchens, modern, 70
 Kossuth, L., 199, 225, 261-67
- LALEHAM School, 163, 282
 Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, 317, 326
 — Public School Association, 89, 153, 154, 155, 177, 202, 203, 206, 248
 Lectures and readings on Carlyle, 108
Leeds Mercury in 1870, 305
 Letters, selections from, 167-85
 Libraries, free, 101, 246
 — reference, 102
 Littlewood, William, 15, 89
 Llyn-y-Cai, 274, 276, 290-93, 323
 Lucas, Mrs. Bright-, 78
 Lucas, Samuel, 89, 153, 155, 198
- MACAULAY, Rev. S. H., 232
 Macdonald, George, 320
 Mackay, Charles, 111, 115, 118-22, 273
 Mackennal, Rev. Dr., 300
 M'Kerrow, Rev. Dr., 38, 137, 153
 M'Laren, Mrs., 68, 78, 150, 151
 Macleod, Dr., 80, 157-66
 Manchester and Liverpool District Bank, 94
 "Manchester, Bygone," Proctor's, 98
- Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 304, 329
Manchester Examiner and Times, 137, 141, 164, 184, 201, 255, 305
 Manchester Free Library, 101, 102
Manchester Guardian, 97, 127, 141
 Manchester Statistical Society, 303, 324, 337
Manchester Times, 137
 Market Drayton, 233, 234
 — Hall, Nantwich, 213, 225, 256
 Martineau, Basil, 142
 — Miss, her book on the East, 184
 — Rev. Janes, 248
 Mason, Hugh, 88, 89, 93, 106, 154, 222
 "Mat," 29
 Mechanics' Institutes, 107, 108, 211
 Meiklejohn, Prof., 300, 306, 357
 Mesmerism and phrenology, 20
 Methodist Free Church, 79, 104
 Mill, J. S., letter from, 302
 Mill, old, at Nantwich, 216, 295
 Mills, James, 90
 — James (father), 195
 Mills, John—School days, 88 *et seq.*
 Banking career, 94, 102, 134, 207, 293, 294, 299, 317, 379, 382
 Literary work—
 Finance and political economy, 302, 317, 332
 Musical, 137, 280, 283-88, 343
 Poems and sonnets, 93, 95, 98, 152, 173, 251-54, 269, 277, 279, 349, 350, 358, 364
 Educational work, 153, 305
 Music, 94, 201, 240, 280, 309, 310, 320, 363
 Correspondence. *See* Hodgson, W. B.; Jevons, W. S.; Kossuth, L.; Mackay, C.; Price, Bonamy; Vaughan, K., &c.
See also chapter vi., Selections from Letters

- Mills, Mrs. (mother), 196
 — Rev. William, 192, 195
 — Samuel, epitaph on, 349
- Milton's widow, 224
- Molesworth, Dr., 15
- Monometallism. *See* Mills, John, Correspondence
- Moore, H., 12
 — R. R. R., 150
- Morell, Dr., 311
- Mott, Lucretia, and her sisters, 129
- Mudd, James, 311
- Muir, A., 352
- Muloch, Miss. *See* Craik, Mrs.
- Mutuals and Mechanics' Institutes, 107, 108, 211
- NANTWICH, 207 *et seq.*
- Napoleon, Louis, 165
- National Education. *See* Education
 — Public School Association.
See Lancashire
 — Social Science Meeting, 302
- Nicoll, Elizabeth Pease, 158
- Nodal, Mr., 154
- Nonsectarianism in national education, 305
- "Northwold," Bowdon, 343
- Novello, Clara, 271
- "OLIVE LEAVES," 21
- Ormerod, Oliver, 11, 26
- PACK-HORSES, 7
- Paton, Noel, 160
- Pattens, Ring, 73, 74, 236
- Patti, Adelina, 280
- Paulton, A. W., 77, 137, 150, 164
- Peace Congress at Paris, 21, 200
- Peacock, H., 141, 255
- Petrie, Ellen, 10, 52, 72
 — George, 12
- Petrie, John, Jun., 11, 12, 26
 — John, Sen., 10, 15, 16, 21, 74-83
 — Joseph, 6, 10, 29
 — Margaret, 19-21, 204
- Phœnix House, Rochdale, 10, 50
- Pipe, Hannah, 161-64, 284, 321, 371
- Plug Riots, 51
- "Poet's Complaint," the (reply to Emerson), 251
- Political Economy. *See* Mills, John, Correspondence
- Potter, T. B., 12
- Prentice, Archibald, 137
- Price, Bonamy, 324, 334-36
- Primitive Methodist Society, the founders of, 243
- Prince, Critchley, 97, 110, 199
- QUEEN Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, 192, 195
- RAILWAYS: first train to Yorkshire, 50; opening of line from Crewe to Shrewsbury, 271
- Ramsay, Gilbert, 230
 — Miss. Musical Scholarship at Lancashire Independent College founded by, 230
- Rates, Church, 14, 75, 104, 236
- Rawson, Harry, 255
- Religious liberty in State education, 305
- Repeal of Corn Laws, 133
- Reyners, of Aston-under-Lyne, 87, 92
- Richardson, Ellen, 128
- Riding, Elijah, 97
- Roach Valley, 38-41
- Robin and Margit, 43
- Rochdale: some characteristics of the people, 103 *et seq.*
 — Juvenile Temperance Band, 26

- Rochdale Literary and Philosophical Society, 133
Rochdale Observer, 11, 12, 61
 — Standard, 11
 Rogers, Samuel, 117
 Rogerson's "Festive Wreath," 97
 Ronge, Madame, and the Kindergarten system, 239
 "Rush-bearing," 106
 Rydal Mount, 113, 190
 Rylands, Mrs., 102
- SCHOOL, Public, Association. *See Lancashire*
 Shaw, Colonel, 312, 350, 361
 Shrewbridge Hall, 224
 Shuttle at home, 42
 Silver, Rev. F., 234-35
 Simpson Clough, 148
 Slavery emancipation in the West Indies, 9
 Smallbridge, 31, 42
 Smith, John Stores, 153, 193, 255
 Social conditions in the Forties, 104-12
 Song writers, epoch, 111
 Southworth, Thomas, 16
 Statistical Society. *See Manchester*
 Stephens family, the, 57, 60, 61, 126
 — J. Rayner, 106, 177
 — Rev. W., 13, 58-60
 Sun Inn, Old, Manchester, 97
 Sunderland, William, 88, 93
 Sutton, Henry, 143, 144
 Swain, Charles, 141, 250
 Sweet Briar Hall, Nantwich, 210, 225
 Swimming-baths, 13
- TAYLOR, Edward, 16
 Temperance meetings, 25-33
 "Thoughts," book of, 362-63
 "Thrutch," 68, 148
Times, *The*, letter to, 333
 Tinder-box and brimstone match, 5
 Toad Lane Theatre, Rochdale, 77
 Tonic Sol-fa system, 240, 283-84, 286, 309-10
 Town-Hall, Nantwich, 229, 271
 Townshend House, Nantwich, 227, 289
 "Triumvirate," the, 138
 Tucker, Rev. Francis, 153
- VAUGHAN, Rev. Dr. R., 201, 286-88
 "Verax." *See* Dunckley, Dr.
- WATCHMEN, 7, 215
 Watkins, Mr., 137
 Watson, John, 311
 Watts, Dr. John, 153, 177
 Waugh, Edwin, 57, 97, 141, 193
 Wedgwood, John, 243
 Welsh Row, Nantwich, 227
 Wesley, John, 75, 224
 Wesleyan Conference, secession from, 79
 Weston Hall, Nantwich, 230
 White Inn on Blackstone Edge, 7, 43
 Wilkinson, T. R., 102, 312, 316, 352
 Willaston Hall, 213
 Woman's Suffrage Question, 39, 77
 Wool Pack, the, at Smallbridge, 31
 Wordsworth, interviews with, 113, 132, 190



